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THE FORTUNES
OF THE
SCATTERGOOD FAMILY.

BY ALBERT SMITH.

AUTHOR OF "THE ADVENTURES OF MR. LEDBURY,"
"THE WASSAIL BOWL," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE FORTUNES

OF THE

SCATTERGOOD FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

THE INGENIOUS MR. JOLLIT SEES EVERYTHING GO OFF TO
HIS SATISFACTION.

ROSHERVILLE, which may be considered a species of paradise between a chalkpit and a zoological garden, is a locality of considerable interest to Gravesend emigrants, combining the magnificence of a regal *parterre* with the advantages of a shilling ordinary, and collateral attractions of various kinds, which only are discovered upon residing at the adjoining popular watering-place.

The day fixed for the fancy fair, whereby the "Provident Crickets" were to derive such benefit, at length arrived; and Mr. Jollit had never before appeared so perfectly in his glory,

as on that morning before the gates were thrown open, when, assisted by the committee, who each carried a little rosette at the button-hole, like the ornament of a bridle headpiece, he marshalled the ladies to their different stalls. Mrs. Hankins's sister probably had the choicest display of wares, through the management of Mr. Snarry, who was going backwards and forwards all the morning to the different lodgings of the contributors in one of the Parrock-street vehicles, familiarly called "shatter-go-dans," a species of carriage which might be discussed with interest at the Antiquarian Society's meetings, as to whether it was ever new, and if so, during what period of early history, and what was the state of the arts and sciences in England at the time.

Be sure the other fair young ladies—especially when they were fair and young—had also attendants, in gloves and stocks of a brilliancy known only to light comedians, and those who go down to the waters in shilling steamers, for festivity. And besides the quadrille music proper to Rosherville, there were two bands stationed about the gardens; one next the bows and arrows, and the other half

way up the hill leading to the tower. Mr. Jollit had provided them, having picked them both up in London, a few evenings before, misplaying popular airs in front of houses of popular resort and refreshment; and he had clothed them in beefeaters' dresses, also obtained from the masquerade warehouse, which gave them a very imposing appearance.

The last arrival, before the gates were opened, was that of Mr. Rasselas Fipps, the troubadour, who came in a close fly, guitar and all, in a state of great fear and trembling, and escorted by a troop of boys on either side, and some riding behind, who had accompanied and huzza'd him all the way from his lodgings. He was received by Mr. Jollit, and then presented successively to all the ladies as the "Rosherville Minstrel," which made him blush more than ever; for although Mr. Fipps's temperament was poetical, and as such beloved by the fair sex, yet in his gentle nature he preferred, and felt easier in their society, in his own clothes, on donkeys, at the melting time of twilight, than he did in green tights and feathers, beneath the flaunting, garish eye of noon.

“Well, Rasselas, how do you feel?” asked the pleasant Jollit, as he paced the greensward with his friend. “I hope you’re not uncomfortable.”

“Oh, not at all, not all,” replied Mr. Fipps, with the pseudocareless air of an individual who tumbles down and hurts himself in a great thoroughfare, before many people, always getting up smiling, as though it were rather a joyous proceeding than otherwise.

“That’s all right,” said Jollit. “Now turn round and let me look at you. The dress fits you capitally.”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Fipps dubiously; “it’s rather small, though. I don’t think I could stoop in it.”

And his appearance bore out his words; being somewhat as tight as the soldier-dolls who stand up amongst the baskets of shaving-soap in the Lowther Arcade.

“Well, never mind,” returned Mr. Jollit, “it sets your figure off. Now go and sit in that arbour; and when you see company coming that way, start out before them, and sing something touching and soft—one or two if you like.”

"Will Moore be too gallant?" asked Rasselas.

"More the merrier," replied Jollit, walking off.

"No—Moore, the poet, I mean. He won't be too—dear, I don't know how to express it—too warm, will he?"

"With the chill off! Oh no, not at all," said Jollit, as he marched off to see something else; and Mr. Fipps retired to his summer-house, practising "Lovely Night," in which he was not quite perfect, but which he had rehearsed the evening before over and over again, until the other lodger formed quite a different opinion of the period in question.

"Mr. Jollit," said a soft voice, as that gentleman crossed the lawn. It belonged to Mrs. Hankins's sister.

"My love?" returned that gentleman, in the most winning tones. He had a familiar manner, which sometimes bordered on affection, especially towards Mrs. Hankins's sister. But Mr. Snarry, who was standing by, knew his friend, and was not jealous.

"What must we charge for these Berlin kettle-holders?" asked the young lady.

"How much do they sell in the shops for?" was the question in reply.

"About eighteen-pence at the Soho Bazaar, I should think."

"Oh! make them half a sovereign, then," said Mr. Jollit; "and if it is a gentleman, and he is inclined to flirt, double it. Now, Snarry, here, I'm sure would give five pounds if you looked at him as you do now."

Mr. Snarry blushed; and Mrs. Hankins's sister said, "Oh! Mr. Jollit, now: you do say such very strange things!" And then that light-hearted gentleman passed on to another part of the gardens.

"I say, Jollit," said Mr. Bam, who appeared to have been mixing salad and slicing cucumbers ever since daybreak in the banqueting-hall, "I've got some news just this minute from my brother."

"Let us have it, then."

"Well, then, we have got an old aunt that's rather religious."

"Oh!" replied Jollit; "she's not coming, is she?"

"No: but something else is. She keeps a Sunday-school out of her own pocket, and be—"

"Hush!" interrupted the funny gentleman:
"I know what you are going to say."

"I have persuaded her," continued Mr. Bam, "to let the scholars have an excursion to the Nore to-day. Now, don't you see, we shall have some children after all to walk about the grounds, and excite much admiration from the company?"

"I see," replied Mr. Jollit; "capital! Are they to know where they are?"

"Not in the least," said Mr. Bam; "they don't know the Nore from Nova Scotia. I shall tell them that summer-house is the Nore: It will do very well. Taste this dressing—it is first-rate," continued Mr. Bam, presenting some in a table-spoon to Mr. Jollit.

"No, thank you, I had rather not; I will take your word," returned that gentleman. "Salad-dressing by itself is not a lively refreshment."

"Excellent!" continued Mr. Bam, in admiration, shaking the peculiar bottle that contained it. "It could not be better if it was 'incorporated by Act of Parliament.'"

Which being intended as a dim joke, the two gentlemen dug each other in the ribs, laughed,

called each other wags, and then Mr. Jollit, assuming a more serious demeanour, observed, "I say, poor Snarry is hit very hard with Mrs. Hankins's sister. I'm afraid it's a case."

"Ah! um! yes," returned Mr. Bam, slicing red hearts from a beet-root cut for that purpose; "love is quite a popular delusion. Were you ever in love, Jollit?"

"Not that I know of," replied his friend; at least never beyond the morning after a party, with some girl I had met the night before. My heart's very like a pop-gun, every shot that comes in drives the other out before it. I say, Bam—"

"Well."

"When the fair is over, keep your eye upon the interesting couple. I will show you some fun before the day's over."

Mr. Bam promised compliance; and Mr. Jollit withdrew to look after the arrangements, for the company were now arriving very fast.

Very gay the gardens looked too, with the groups promenading about over the fresh greensward, dotting the leafy precipices with their lightly-tinted dresses, and moving along the top of the heights or sitting on the edges

of them, and gazing on the fair prospect of foliage, river, and distant headlands before them. Some were in the arbours—but these were only in pairs—remaining incredibly long spaces of time without any other amusement than that of talking to one another: others were in the maze, and it was remarkable what pains the young ladies took, after some intelligent cavalier had inducted them to the centre, to take every way of getting out again but the right one; and then the trellised barriers resounded with light silvery laughter, and little coquettish bonnets could be seen along the top of them, flirting with gallant-looking hats, or skimming away before them.

Mr. Joe Jollit was everywhere at once; now leading off a round of applause to Mr. Fipps, who by dint of violent beverages was at last excited to commence his minstrelsy; and anon going to the various stalls, admiring the goods audibly if he saw many people standing round them, and buying sovereign purses, worsted half-pence jugs, and sticking-plaister cases at immense prices,—with a quiet understanding, however, that they were to be returned as soon as the other customers had departed. Mr.

Snarry kept close to the stall of Mrs. Hankins's sister the whole day, looking all sorts of cutting instruments and edged tools at the gentlemen who lingered over her wares, paying compliments. And Mr. Bam's client, the lady high in rank, was continually asking all the fair retailers whether they had sold any of the "Rainbow of Reality," walking about the grounds in all the pride of a *conversazione* authoress, and instructing her "companion," who was not remarkable for beauty, and consequently in no danger of philandering, to be perpetually reading a copy of the charming little work, and with great apparent interest, under a parasol upon a mechanical campstool.

Mr. Bam's autographs went off wonderfully well, more especially those of Shakspeare, which name he spelt all sorts of ways to suit the taste of the purchasers; and there was also a little ode, purporting to be written by Linnæus, and translated by the Rev. Gilbert White, omitted in his Natural History of Selbourne, which being addressed to a cricket, was remarkably appropriate to the day; and was intended also to have been sung by the children,

but the hard names confused them. This was it:

IN GRYLLO (TO A CRICKET).

Who is 't, when frosts begin to chill us,
With chirping, mirthful notes doth thrill us
Around the fire?—domestic *Gryllus*,
My cricket!

Whose voice of warmth and life the test is,
As musical as that of *Vestris*,
Thee, and thy brother, term'd *campestris*?
My cricket!

Who sleep'st near ovens all the day,
But on thy wings at night dost play,
Of order term'd *Neuroptera*,
My cricket!

Whom all have heard, but never saw;
Thou dost thy chirp from friction draw,
And not, as some think, from thy jaw,
My cricket!

Whose *tibiæ* are very strong,
Elytra cross'd by nerves, a throng:
With labial *palpi* not too long,
My cricket!

Tarleton's note also fetched a high price; as well as an unedited joke of that person, who appears only to have equalled Joe Miller in dismal fun. It was as follows:

How Carlton fell out with a gallerie fellowe.

Carlton, playing at the Bull, in Bishop his Gate, by reason of many people and much disporte, a wag halter boy did cry: "Throw him ober." "Marry, boy," saies Carlton, "thou hast a quick wit." "Ay," saies the boy, "which can catch anything." "Then, God a mercy, boy, you'll catch it," saies Carlton, throwing a pippin which hit him sorelie. And eber after it was a by-word thorow Bishop his Gate, "You'll catch it," and is to this day.

The day went on pleasantly enough for everybody; and at last the fair concluded, to the great increase of the funds, and then the pretty stall-keepers left the tents, and wandered about the grounds with their *attachés*, as well as the rest of the company. Many delightful things were whispered and heard in the ruddy twilight; eyes grew more eloquent as the sun declined, and hearts softened, in company with the outlines of surrounding objects. And then the bands struck up for the dance, and twinkling lights, like many-coloured glow-worms, dotted the flower-beds, or coruscated on the stars and balloons of the banqueting-hall, to the admiration of the beholders. There was also a concert, and it would have done the heart good of any extant master of ceremonies to have seen Mr. Jollit lead the *prima donna* into the music

gallery to sing, and lead her off again when she had finished. And the *prima donna* herself was a beautiful young lady in real feathers, who wore one side of her shawl over her shoulders, and the other under her waist, and who, when she sang a song expressive of her positive wish to enter into the matrimonial state, provided she could only find some eligible gallant whose attributes harmonized with her own mental idiosyncrasy, she threw such glances at the gentlemen below, that it was a wonder they did not all make an offer at once.

So passed the time until it was perfectly dark, when the fireworks were announced, and the company once more assembled on the lawn. The fireworks themselves had been exposed to view all day. They were wonderfully mysterious-looking things, very like magnified ornaments on French tombstones; and, from the facility offered by the quickmatches, Mr. Jollit would have lighted them long before their time with a cigar, if it had not been his own fête. But he did not wish to play practical jokes upon himself, and so he left their combustion to the proper men. First of all a rocket went up, and drew the people's gaze after it, who

indulged in the groans of admiration proper to be observed upon such occasions. Then wheels went off, first one way and then another, slow at first, and then fast; and things changed, and turned, and banged, and the usual routine of pyrotechnicism was observed, until Mr. Joe Jollit, after communing with Mr. Bam, came forward during a temporary cessation of brilliancies, and made a speech as follows:—

“ Ladies and gentlemen,—I have a firework now to offer to your notice of most original beauty; for never has anything been seen like it before. It is called the ‘*bouquet d’amour*,’ and its exhibition will conclude the day’s festivities. The committee of the society in aid of whose funds the fête has taken place, desire me to return you their best thanks.”

Applause followed Mr. Jollit’s speech, who retired; and then expectation was on tiptoe. The firework commenced—it was an ordinary one for a little time, until it went off into a circle of port-fires, encircling the word “Farewell.” And then a sparkling light was seen hovering at the extremity of the lawn, which immediately burst out into a glare of Bengal fire of dazzling brilliancy, shedding a light

equal to that of day—perhaps beyond it—upon the surrounding scenery. It was placed in front of a summer-house, behind which Mr. Jollit and Mr. Bam were seen rapidly making a retreat; but in the interior, which was illuminated with an intensity equalling that of oxyhydrogen, the astonished spectators beheld Mr. Snarry at the feet of Mrs. Hankins's sister, and apparently offering up the warmest protestations of love; whilst at a small distance, seated on a tea-table, Mr. Rasselas Fipps was singing soft melodies to his guitar, being in Mr. Snarry's confidence, and having been requested to do so, that additional romance might be thrown about the rendezvous.

A whirlwind of applause burst from the large audience at the unexpected disclosure. Mrs. Hankins's sister buried her face in her handkerchief as Mr. Snarry rushed wildly from the arbour; and in the madness of desperation, unable to find his own hat, seized the plumed bonnet of Mr. Fipps, and extinguished the glaring telltale in an instant.

But the mischief was done, and the excitement did not stop with the burning case. The audience again cheered loudly; Mrs. Hankins

went into hysterics, and was taken into the banqueting-hall ; and her spouse rushed madly to the summer-house, declaring that he would have Mr. Snarry's best heart's blood, or fall himself, either of which consummations, in the perfect absence of anything like weapons, would have appeared, upon calm reflection, somewhat difficult to bring about. But when the protector of his sister-in-law's propriety reached the arbour, both the late inmates had flown ; and he was compelled to be satisfied by wreaking verbal vengeance upon Mr. Fipps, who had remained aghast, and nearly paralyzed, ever since the beginning of the catastrophe.

CHAPTER II.

AN UNEXPECTED PARTY VISITS MR. ROSSET'S ARENA.

THE unflinching nerve and muscular strength shewn by Vincent in rescuing Brandon from the clutches of the tigress was not without its effect on Mr. Rosset. He immediately perceived that he would be a very valuable addition to his *corps olympique*; and the next morning, when he accompanied Mr. Fogg to the theatre, the manager began to test his capability.

A curious sight was the circus in the morning. All the dens had been removed into an inner tent, around which their caravans were stationed; the tan and sawdust had been raked very smooth, and a young man in a light, thin jacket and trowsers, with buff slippers, was rehearsing an equestrian act upon two horses, upon which he leapt over a thin gate of laths, the top bars of which were so

contrived that they opened to the horses' legs, and closed up again immediately. There was no music, and the scene altogether had such a slow appearance, that no one would have recognized in the performer of the morning the spangled "Tartarean hunter of the wilderness," who went round the circle, flashing like a meteor in the evening.

In the centre of the ring, Mr. Rosset was instructing a small pony in what the Terpsichorean advertisements call "dancing and deportment;" but the small horse did not appear to evince any great disposition for the usages of polite society. Rosset had strapped up the hoofs of its fore feet to the upper part of the leg; and was now making the animal crawl upon its knees after him, with its nose grubbing in the sawdust all round the circle, by dint of whip, halter, and threatening persuasion. But when, at night, the pony rang a bell for some oats on a gilt plate, and sat at a table-cloth fringed with tinsel, people imagined that he was a most happy animal to be thus attended to. They did not see him during the morning's tuition.

Mr. Fogg was sitting in the orchestra, as

far away from the tent where the animals were as he could well be, now and then putting in a few remarks upon such things that struck his imagination vividly.

“I should like to do a drama,” said he “upon Gulliver’s Travels.”

“It’s been done,” returned Mr. Rosset.

“The difficulty now is to find what has not been done,” observed Mr. Fogg.

“I never have,” replied the manager proudly; “at least by authors. I pay for all my pieces by the night; and then if they don’t run, it’s the fault of the writers — if they do, it benefits both.”

“Then if a play is unlucky, it is a dead loss to the author,” remarked Mr. Fogg mildly.

“Of course it is,” returned the other; “but what’s his loss compared to mine in getting it up? He can only lose two or three quires of paper.”

“But his ideas—the wear and tear of brain,” continued Fogg.

“Oh, that’s all nothing; you don’t pay anything, you know, for ideas and brains: they come natural.”

Mr. Fogg perceived that the value of mental labour was not understood by the circus man-

ager. He therefore returned to his original position.

"I still think you might do something with Gulliver's Travels. Not with the little people and the great ones, but the horses with the strange names that nobody knows how to pronounce any more than if they were Welsh,—much less to spell."

"Well, do it—do it," said Mr. Rosset; "only it's difficult to manage a lot of horses by themselves upon the stage. This cursed pony can't be left alone by himself yet; as he is, he tries to fire off the wine-bottle, and drink out of the pistol. Stupid brute! one would think some horses were entirely idiotic."

And, by way of correction for the future, he gave the pony a pretty smart cut with his whip.

"Couldn't something new be contrived?" said Mr. Fogg; "people have seen ponies at supper so often. I've read of a horse that danced the tight-rope."

"Ah—I know," answered Rosset; "in what's his name's book—Strutt's Times and Passports—I've been told of it, and don't believe a word. My horses are very nearly as

much Christians as I am; but they couldn't do that. Heyday! eleven o'clock. Now, William, call the ladies and gents for the entry.

Several of the company now made their appearance upon the summons of the call-boy, including Mrs. F. Rosset, who was introduced to Vincent. She was a fine-looking woman, with a hand that felt like horn, and a voice which sounded as if, having talked amongst sawdust and horse-hair so long, it had imbibed a large quantity of both. She had been an actress from her birth, but only lately an equestrian. As is often the case, there was the stage in every one of her gestures and attitudes; and her speeches were all made up of conventional dramatic sentences. And when Vincent expressed the gratification he experienced from the introduction, she said, "You do me proud." The other *écuyères* were also handsome girls, even in their common toilets, but they were not remarkable for grammatical correctness or fluency of expression when they spoke. However, in their instance, physical, rather than intellectual superiority was looked for, and provided they could stick tight to their saddle, and say "Come up!"

or "Hold hard," this was all that was required of them.

Vincent was mounted on a horse that had formed one of the pair upon which the gentleman in the light dress, who turned out to be Mr. F. Rosset—the "Energetic whirlwind,"—had been doing the "Tally-ho of Thermopylæ," or something of the kind. As he patted the back of the animal, a cloud of white powder flew about, covering his dress, which at first he took for some remarkable physiological phenomenon, connected with the idiosyncrasy of circus horses.

"Hi!" cried Mr. Rosset, as he saw it. "Hi, Simmons! why isn't that mare cleaned?"

"I hadn't time, sir," replied the groom.

"Never mind, Mr. Scatterbrains, Thingum-tight, What-is-it? It's only chalk."

"Oh!—I don't care," replied Vincent; "only I don't see what you chalk your horses for."

"Always do, sir, in daring acts of equitation upon bare-backed steeds; that's why we always use white horses for it. They couldn't keep their footing without, nohow; leastwise the generality. My Fred could hang on by his eyelashes, if it was wanted."

The *corps* now commenced the rehearsal of the "*Wild Cotillion of Queen Elizabeth and the Tartar Horde of Peking*," and then Mr. Rosset became a person wonderful to gaze upon, as he took his place on the elevated orchestra, by the big drum, upon which he thumped, from time to time, with the handle of his stick, whenever he wanted to procure silence. For his energy and emphasis were alike wonderful. Indeed, as he remarked to Mr. Fogg, "unless a man had cast-iron lungs, and could swear hard enough to split an oak plank and turn the sky yellow, he need not be a master of a circus."

In the written programme of the performance which Mr. F. Rosset read from time to time to guide the manœuvres of the company, there was a direction to the "Horde," that, having encamped, they were to implore the protection of their guardian spirit. Nobody appeared precisely to know what this meant, until Mr. Rosset, senior, thus interpreted it:

"Halloo ! you, sirs—look here, and be d—d to you. Suppose that candle-hoop's the guardian spirit; very well. Now you get off your horses, and make 'em lie down, and then look

at the candle-hoop, as much as to say, "Don't shirk us, there's a jolly good chap. That's it—very good. Now again.—Will—you—hold—your—tongues?"

This last speech was given with an obligato bang on the drum between every word, which had the effect of silencing the talkers.

"Now, then," continued Mr. Rosset, "encamp, and go to sleep, with the horses for your pillows.—Mr. Scatterwood, put your head between the mare's hind-heels.—You needn't be afraid—she's very quiet, and its more effective.—Now, ladies—*ladies*!!"

Another solo on the drum.

"Do pray attend. You keep guard by the watch-fires."

Mrs. F. Rosset was bold enough to inquire where the watch-fires were supposed to be.

"Bless me! anywhere — there! that's a watch-fire." replied Mr. Rosset, taking off his hat and throwing it into the arena. "Now then, ladies, keep watch over that hat, whilst your lovers are asleep."

"That does not strike me as being very gallant," observed Mr. Fogg.

"Hush!" returned Rosset; "you don't

understand it. Love, you know,—woman's devotion—touching—affects the shilling audience. That's a good tableau—isn't it? Only lights, and music, and dresses will make such a difference, you know."

Mr. Fogg certainly thought so too; the adjuncts would make a very great difference. And then he continued:

"Why don't you get up a local scene, and call it Lady Godiva?"

"Ah! um!" replied Mr. Rosset, hesitating; "not bad, but you see the difficulty would be about Godiva herself. I don't think I could find anybody to play it."

"To the eye of the poet and artist—"

"Yes, I know—very proper," interrupted Mr. Rosset: "but our audience are not all poets and artists; they've got eyes like other people. No—it wouldn't do."

Some more scenes were gone through, including the performance of a heavy, thick-set man, known as "the Bounding Ball of the arena," and then the troop separated for dinner, to meet again at six.

Mr. Rosset's bills had answered in attracting an audience, for by the hour of commencement,

every seat was filled. Mrs. F. Rosset sat in the tilted cart at the principal entrance, until the very last minute, half in her arena dress, over which a cloak was thrown, and wearing a fine bonnet and feathers, in style similar to those which used to be patronized by the ladies who presided, under umbrellas, over the *al-fresco* gaming tables at the races, at which everybody always threw numbers next door to the great prize. And when the time arrived for her to join the others, Mr. Rosset took her place to look after the currency. But beyond this, he did not appear in any public capacity.

Vincent thought his old manner of life was beginning again, as he put on a species of Chinese dress, together with some of the other riders, in an apartment between a tent, a stable, and a dressing-room. And a gloom fell upon his spirits, for the moment, as he reflected on his position, dragged down lower and lower from his proper station, without any apparent means of extricating himself. But in the midst of these dark thoughts, he was called upon to mount and appear before the audience, in the "grand entry;" and then his attention was too much occupied with riding in endless

figures of eights amongst the others, to think of anything else.

The amusements went on. Gentlemen in flesh tights jumped over strips of cloth, coming down on the horse again; whilst, at the end of the ride, the music played most furiously to impress the audience with an idea that the steed was going as fast as the large cymbal or the drum. Ladies also sped round, bearing three or four yards of pink gauze, which floated behind them like a scarf, and threw themselves into seductive attitudes, looking gracefully at chimerical objects; and the clown indulged in jokes, honoured by age, but which, notwithstanding, produced the same laughs as they did fifty years ago: for it is a blessed privilege of jokes, and tends much to soothe their advanced age, that the older they get, the better and warmer is their reception; and a really venerable *bon-mot* need never fear that a flaming young jest will stand higher in popularity, or be greeted with a more cheering welcome. So, when Mr. Merriman picked up a straw that was lying on the sawdust, for fear it should throw him down, and afterwards said he was going to play one of "Straw's

waltzes" upon it, there was great laughter ; there was more when he spoke of his idle man John, whom he always gave a pint of yeast to for supper, to make him rise in the morning ; but when he said that he had ceased to be a spinster, and married a wife with a wooden leg, who used to help him plant beans by walking over the field before him to dibble the hole, there was such a roar of merriment that it almost became painful to see how the contemplation of a human infirmity could produce so much laughter. Everybody, the young folks especially, loved Mr. Merriman, and their moral sense of right and wrong was entirely lost sight of where he was concerned. If the boys had met him by day, they would have cheered him in the thoroughfare, but they never came across his path—at least, that they were aware of. They little knew that the pale and melancholy man, with thin lips and attenuated frame, whom they often met, was their idol of the evening's entertainments.

Business proved good, and Mr. Rosset pitched his tent at Coventry for many evenings. Vincent became good friends with every member of the company, from the elephant down-

wards; and Brandon especially took such a liking to him, and proceeded to instruct him in so many of the mysteries of brute-taming, that there is no doubt he would have been a "jungle monarch" himself in a short time. But a change in his destinies was on the eve of taking place. There was a full house one evening; and Vincent had just been assisting at a grand performance of the whole troop, in which they had successively to jump along a spring board, and over a horse's back,—except Mr. Merriman, who usually evaded the performance by an ignoble method of proceeding, such as stopping short when he came to the leap, or stooping down and running between the horse's legs. The performance was at its height, when Mrs. Rosset sent to the proprietor of the circus in great alarm, to say, that a carriage had just drawn up to the entrance, and that she was sure there was no room left upon the two-shilling benches.

Mr. Rosset, who was habited upon that particular occasion to do honour to the mayor and corporation, whose bespeak it was, in a dress which affected a neat compromise between the costumes of a jockey and a dra-

goon, directly bustled out to the door, determined to convert the orchestra waggon into an extempore private box, if there was occasion. He found the information correct; there was a carriage-and-four at the entrance, with the horses steaming, as if neither whip nor spur had been spared on the journey, and a gentleman already on the ground, standing on the step.

“Have you any one named Scattergood in your company?” asked the gentleman hurriedly.

“I have,” replied Mr. Rosset; “do you wish tickets for his benefit, because he is in the ring just now?”

“No, no,” said the gentleman, “I must see him.”

And to the great bewilderment of Mr. Rosset, he rushed past the pay place, and into the theatre, where he directly recognized Vincent. To jump over the barrier of the arena, and drag his newly-found acquaintance from the ring, was the work of a few seconds, which proceeding checked some applause the audience were beginning to indulge in; for they conceived at first this interruption was

part of the performance, in which the stranger was to throw off an infinity of coats and waistcoats, and, lastly, appear in a pink shape-dress, as Fame, blowing a long wooden post-horn, and riding very fast, to the delight of the beholders. But what good-hearted Mr. Fogg would have called a better "situation" even than this, took place when Vincent was brought to the carriage; for then, in spite of his curious tights and spangled dress, a young lady actually leant forward, and throwing her arms round his neck, kissed him, as he presented himself, more astonished than anybody, at the door. And another lady, much older, burst into tears as she also pressed forward to receive him, and addressed a few words to him in a well-known voice, that went to his very heart: it was indeed his mother and Clara, who had thus so unexpectedly once more met him.

And the gentleman who had so curiously interrupted the performance was Mr. Herbert. He now hurriedly introduced himself to Vincent, for the hearts of the others were too full to think of anything else. And, to the destruction of Mr. Rosset's hopes that another carriage party was about to occupy

the best seats, Vincent was made to rush back to the dressing-tent, and hurriedly change his attire; so that, in two minutes, in his ordinary clothes, he was again in the carriage, bowling along towards one of the best hotels in Coventry, leaving Mr. Rosset and his company perfectly aghast at this wonderful whirl of events.

There had been a great many curious assemblages in the room of that hotel: there had been run-away couples, funeral parties, and coroner's inquests; coffins had rested there upon trestles during the dreary journey of those who had died in distant parts of England, to the old churchyard in which was their family vault, and the same trestles had supported the tables of convivial dinners, when the room rang with merriment and harmony. The air of that room had clung to the body, and filtered through the winding-sheet of the dead; it had reeked with the vapours of wine and feasting; youth, lights, and revelry—age, darkness, and sorrow, had alike been its occupants; but it never contained a party so deeply interested in each other, who had met under such strange cir-

cumstances, who had so much to tell, as those who were now assembled in it.

And when the first burst of greeting was over, Vincent heard from Clara what had happened; for his mother was too agitated at meeting him, after such a long and strange absence, to enter fully into particulars. Herbert made up some imaginary appointment in the city, which took him away for awhile, and then Clara began to tell everything; not more, however, than Herbert would have found he already knew, had he stayed. And if Clara had possessed fifty tongues, she would not have thought they spoke fast enough for all the good news she had to convey; for during her stay at Brabants—and it was only for one night and half a day—she had so interested Mr. Grantham in his favour, and cleared Vincent's character, putting his disposition in its true light, that that gentleman had almost consented to receive him, and repented of his harsh treatment, through all his pride. And Amy had sent so many messages, and even a little note, with her father's knowledge too; and old uncle Gregory had astonished them all, and upset Lisbeth's pro-

priety of demeanour, and paralyzed Mrs. Chicksand, by coming one day to call upon Mr. Scattergood, full of all his old notions, which, however, they let him uphold to the full of his bent. And then he opened his mind to them, and told them that his antipodean page, whom he had hired of the mountebanks, had turned out badly, and associated with thieves, who had attacked his house one night, since which he had decided upon not living alone any more. So that, if they could contrive to take a house, where he might have his own apartments fitted up in his own manner, he would come and live with them; for he had no other relatives in the world, and looked upon all nurses and housekeepers as harpies and vampyres.

All this was cheering news; and Clara's eyes never sparkled so brightly, nor her face ever look so lovely, as whilst she poured her budget forth to Vincent. Had Herbert been there, he would have loved her more than ever. He came back in a little time; and then Vincent soon understood in what position they were about to stand towards each other. And when the mother had somewhat

recovered the shock of their meeting, which, after their long separation, had been to her a very trying one, she joined in the conversation as well.

How happy they were ! The quarters from the old church appeared to be chiming the minutes, so quickly did the time fly on ; and when at last the bell tolled midnight, and its information was corroborated by the occupants of the other towers, there was one general expression of surprise that it was so late. It was a mistake—all the clocks were evidently wrong—it could not be more than ten. They wished Vincent to stay in the hotel that night : but he preferred going back to the little inn where he had lodged since his arrival at Coventry, promising to come back very early in the morning.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST APPEARANCE OF MR. FOGG. THE RETURN HOME.

VINCENT slept but little that night, for his brain was in a perfect whirl. The bright sun darted through the windows before he closed his eyes; and then his mind was equally confused. He slumbered but for an hour or two; and as soon as he heard footsteps in the chamber above, betokening that Mr. Fogg had got up, or, as he more gracefully said, had sprung from his couch, Vincent rose also, impatient to tell his good friend everything, and feeling assured that he would enter into his happiness.

And he was not deceived. The kindly dramatic author,—who had been at the circus last evening when Vincent quitted it in so strange a manner, and who had ever since been in great anxiety as to the cause and result of such a proceeding, until he had

determined to make it a situation at the end of the first act of the next drama he wrote, feeling assured it would excite the feelings of everybody—this good and simple soul was as overjoyed as Vincent himself. And when Vincent told him of all the things Clara had accomplished, he applauded with his hands as he would have done at a playhouse; and inwardly congratulated himself, at the same time, at having found a new heroine of the domestic drama, who might eclipse all the virtuous poor men's daughters, and moral servants-of-all-work, who had ever figured in his most affecting pieces.

Vincent went over to the circus to bid a hasty good-bye to such of his late associates as were there in the morning; and then collecting his few things together—they were very few—prepared to join his mother and sister. But before he left their little inn, he took a hearty farewell of Mr. Fogg, who was about to depart that morning for Henley-in-Arden, and rehearse his new piece with the dolls of Mr. Rosset's establishment.

“I leave you in better spirits now than when we parted that evening on the wharf,”

said Vincent; "but I am not the less grateful for what you have done for me."

"Belay there, belay," returned Mr. Fogg, as his mind reverted to the days of the "Lee Shore of Life." "I did but do my duty. Where there's enough for one, there's enough for two; and the man who would not share his crust with the hapless stranger, deserves not to defy the present or look forward with honest aspirations to the future."

"I wish I had something to give you as a keepsake," said Vincent. "Not but what I hope to see you again before long; still I wish you not to forget me altogether. I have nothing but my old pipe—it has been a long, long way with me; an old friend, who never withheld its consolation when I was hard-up or in trouble. Will you accept it?"

"The calumet of amity!" observed Mr. Fogg, as he took the pipe from Vincent, and gazed at it with fondness. "I shall preserve it for your sake."

"And may it serve you as faithfully as it has done me!" said Vincent; "for, in its time, it has been everything but lodging. I never felt alone with that old pipe. In the dark

dreary nights there was comfort and companionship in its glowing bowl; and by day, when the smoke floated about me, I used to fancy that it showed me how the clouds of trouble would disperse, if we had but a little patience." I have been very hungry too, when that old pipe has brought me my dinner."

During this speech of Vincent's, Mr. Fogg had been anxiously searching in his various pockets, and at last produced a pencil-case of common manufacture, which he placed in the hand of his friend.

"And that is all I have got to offer you in return," he said; "but it has been an 'umble and faithful servant also to me; the parent of my dramas."

"There is a seal on the top," continued Mr. Fogg; "a seal of green glass; it bears a ship tossed by the-waves, and the motto, 'Such is life.' It suggested to me the 'Lee Shore;' and the motto, with variations, has furnished many a sentiment for the applause of the galleries."

"You could not give me anything I should prize more," said Vincent, as he took Mr. Fogg's humble offering.

They left the house together, and walked on

until their journey turned to different ways ; at which point, with every reiterated good wish and expression of gratitude, Vincent shook his friend warmly by the hand, and they parted. But as Mr. Fogg went up the street, he turned back many times to nod to Vincent, until he came to the corner ; and then, as the morning sunshine fell upon him, he waved his hand in final adieu, like a spirit departing in a bright *tableau* from one of his own pieces, with an air of good omen ; and so went on his way.

And sunshine came to Vincent too—to him and to those so dear to him ; the sunshine of the heart, the bright hope of brighter times to come. Although it was still early, they had been long expecting him ; and when he reached the hotel, carelessly swinging the bundle in his hand, which contained all his effects, the horses were immediately ordered ; whilst Clara insisted upon his taking a second breakfast, watching everything he tasted as if he had been an infant—firmly believing that he had lived in a state of absolute starvation for some months ; and nearly choking him with her anxiety to see that he was served with everything at once.

The carriage was soon up to the door, and they once more started to return to London. Ninety-one miles—it was nothing. Their conversation allowed them to take no heed of time or distance. The journey was nothing but a rapid succession of arrivals at inns, and ringing of bells by excited hostlers, for no other purpose that could be made out than to summons themselves, and call all those together who were already there in attendance; and taking out horses, and putting them too; and then, again, flying along the hard level road. Ninety-one miles—all they had still to say would not have been got over in nine hundred, had the journey been of that length. Vincent remarked that Herbert paid for everything, and from a slender silk purse, with bright steel beads and sparkling tassels, by a curious coincidence precisely similar to the one which Clara gave him during their brief, but miserable interview in Mrs. Constable's hall! There could be no mistake about its fairy texture, or whose were the active and taper fingers that had manufactured it.

Afternoon came on; then twilight: yet as it got cooler, Clara, singularly enough, would not

go under the head of the carriage, but made Vincent sit there by the side of his mother, whilst she remained close to Herbert, shrouded in some complicated fashion or another — they themselves only knew how — by his large cloak, in a manner which appeared exceedingly comfortable. And before the moon was well up, the lights of London could be plainly seen reflected in the sky, coming nearer and nearer, until the first lamp shone out on the roadside.

They left the level turnpike-way behind them, and rattled over the stones at last. But there was nothing unpleasant in the commotion; no—they seemed to clatter forth a rude welcome to the travellers; and there was an excitement in their noise and rough jolting, that sent the blood still quicker through its channels. Then came the long glittering lines of gas upon the bridges, and the wider thoroughfares and poorer shops across the water; next, rows of uniform houses, with gardens in front; and, here and there, trees and open spaces, until the carriage at last stopped at the tenement of Mrs. Chicksand. We might more properly have said of her husband: but as he seldom appeared, and nobody knew him when

he did, his wife was the prominent feature of the establishment, both in her public and domestic position.

They were evidently expected. There was more than ordinary light in the drawing-room; and as the carriage stopped, the blinds were thrust on one side, and various forms were seen peeping out. And Mrs. Chicksand had lighted the passage lamp, which was an illumination only indulged in upon extraordinary occasions, and chiefly dependant upon any end of wax candle which could be put by without being accounted for to the lodgers. And that lady herself came to the door: giving orders to Lisbeth to lie in ambush on the kitchen stairs, half-way down, in a clean cap and new ribbons, and be in readiness to bring up any extra assistance, or body of able tea-things that might be required.

They were all there. Mr. Scattergood and Freddy, whose holidays had come round; and Amy—slily invited by Clara to stay a few days, and with her father's permission—trembling, blushing, smiling, and almost crying by turns. Mr. Scattergood, in his general absent manner, which on the present occasion

might perhaps be considered an advantage, received Vincent as if he had only been a day or two absent, certainly not even now perfectly comprehending what was going on, in the same spirit of easy apathy which had been his enemy through life, until he got his present appointment in the government office, where such a temperament was of no consequence. And Clara and Amy had, as usual, such a deal to say to one another, whilst the former was taking off her travelling attire, that Mrs. Scattergood thought they were never coming down again, until she sent Herbert up to knock and summons them. Even then, Amy came back by herself, whilst Herbert had apparently something of great consequence to communicate to Clara outside the door; but what it was nobody ever knew except Lisbeth, who chanced to be coming up stairs with the tea-things just at the moment. And as she never told, nobody was, with these exceptions, ever any the wiser. It could, however, have been nothing very unpleasant, for the whole party were in high spirits, laughing and talking until such a late hour, that when Mr. Bodle returned at an unholy hour from some concert, at which he

had been conducting, he found an hieroglyphical scroll impaled upon his candle, which clever people might have deciphered into an order not to put up the chain, nor lock the door and hide the key in the fanlight, as was his wont to do. Even long after he sought his iron bedstead, sounds of conversation came from below, and sometimes songs in the demi-audibility of a floor beneath, which at last mingled with his sleeping thoughts, and produced dreams of confused construction, in which the lady of his affections, who lived next door, figured, together with everybody else, under the most extravagant circumstances—one of those inextricable visions which are alone dependant upon love, or Welsh rarebits, for their origin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LATEST INTELLIGENCE OF EVERYBODY.—
CONCLUSION.

IN the dramas which our friend Mr. Glenalvon Fogg was in the habit of producing, there were certain situations, towards the close of the last scene, wherein the audience generally, to his extreme disgust, were accustomed to rise up and think about their shawls or the difficulty of procuring a conveyance in the rush, heedless of what was going on upon the stage. For they saw that the various characters were rapidly approaching universal reconciliation; and so they cared little further to interest themselves in the development of the plot, albeit the "tag," as Mr. Fogg technically termed it, was to him a most important point, and cost him usually more labour than any other portion of the drama.

Now the "tag" is usually framed in this manner; it is explained for fear the courteous

reader should not precisely understand what we mean, as well as to furnish young beginners with a guide, being an appeal, if cleverly made, which not only winds up the performance with a flourish, but even assuages the serpent of disapprobation who may have commenced winding about the house. When all parties are made happy, and the old man has forgiven them, the popular character should step forward, in a touchingly appealing manner to the lamps, and say, "But our happiness still further depends upon your forgiveness; let me therefore solicit that" — &c.; to be filled up as circumstances require. Or, when alluding to present joy, the popular character may add, "And if these kind friends will but look kindly on our delinquencies, we may be tempted (according to the nature of the piece) either 'to take A Trip to Anywhere,' or 'to claw off The Lee Shore of Life,' or 'to pass through the Seven Sinks of Profligacy,'—every evening until further notice."

We know that our own "tag" is fast approaching; but we request, although the shadow of forthcoming events may be thrown

upon the progress of our story, that you will not yet quit our pages, but bear with us a little longer. Yet we do not wish to weary you, as indeed is sometimes the case with certain performances that we have seen. We are not going to drag two chairs down to the lights and commence, "Thirteen months since" — in allusion to the time that has passed since our *dramatis personæ* appeared in these leaves, rather than on these boards. We only beg you will keep us company yet a little time before we part.

In a few days after the arrival of Vincent, his family changed their abode, and were domiciled in a neat small house, still in the neighbourhood, however, of their old quarters. Mrs. Chicksand after their departure began to get in despair. The bill remained up for a period hitherto unheard of; Mr. Bodle alone remained constant to the household gods; and, in the absence of other lodgers, the fare became in every sense a reduced one. But one fine morning Mrs. Chicksand was delighted by the sudden appearance of Mr. Snarry, fresh and blooming from Gravesend, who, accompanied by Mr. Jollit, marched up

the small garden and knocked at the door. Mrs. Chicksand's heart beat quickly—she indulged a hope that Mr. Snarry had caught an occupant for the top of the house. But it was better still.

“And so the first floor is empty,” observed Mr. Snarry to Mrs. Chicksand when the greetings had passed between them. “I think I may want it before long.”

“Thank you, sir,” replied the hostess, “what I say to C. is, that I'd sooner have fifty gentlemen than one lady, even if they were all on the second floor.”

Mr. Jollit directly imagined that he saw the half-hundred of lodgers located in that partition of the house; and had a laugh to himself, in consequence, at the bare idea of the scene of confusion it would create.

“But,” said Mr. Snarry, with a suspicion of a blush upon his cheek, “I fear there will be a lady, Mrs. Chicksand: a great event in my life is about to take place.”

“Indeed, sir;” said Mrs. Chicksand, who was directly sorry she had spoken, and had a faint idea of what Mr. Snarry was nervous in communicating.

“Melancholy thing, ma’am, of our poor friend,” said Mr. Jollit to Mrs. Chicksand, with solemn gravity: “he sat in the sun one day, and it flew to his head: quite lost his reason since he was here last; obliged to have a keeper. Do you find strait-waistcoats with the sheets and table-cloths?”

“Don’t mind him, Mrs. Chicksand,” said Mr. Snarry, with a look of mild rebuke. “The fact is,” and he hesitated, “the fact is, I am going to be married.”

Whereupon Mr. Jollit suddenly inflated his cheeks, and imitated a person in the agonies of suppressed laughter, until Lisbeth was compelled to dust nothing upon the mantel-piece, and then put it straight to conceal her own disposition to join in Mr. Joe Jollit’s merriment. But the prospect of a first-floor kept Mrs. Chicksand staid and orderly.

“And so the Scattergoods are gone!” observed Mr. Snarry, when the revelation had been made, and he had been congratulated thereon. “Ah! I thought once I should not have another love!” and he sighed sentimentally as he added, “this house brings her to my mind.”

And then he added a little couplet wherein "*toujours*" rhymed with "*amours*;" upon which Mr. Jollit begged he would not talk Hebrew, because he did not understand it.

"And may I be bold enough to ask who the lady is?" asked Mrs. Chicksand.

"You have seen her here," said Mr. Snarry; "it is Mrs. Hankins's sister."

"Oh! a nice young lady;" returned the hostess, smirking at this proof of Mr. Snarry's confidence; "and that Lisbeth always thought, and so did I; and told Chicksand that Mr. Jollit was sweet there."

"Mr. Jollit is sweet everywhere," returned that gentleman. "No, no! Mrs. Chicksey-biddy; Mr. Jollit has still got his senses: he looks upon marriage as a popular deception. Now, Snarry, if you have settled everything, we will go, or we shall miss the boat."

A private conversation of five minutes with the landlady settled everything; and then the friends departed. But as they turned from the road, Mr. Jollit indulged in another quiet joke, by calling the attention of an omnibus cad with his finger to an imaginary balloon in the air: and then laughing at him for being

taken in, and bowing to a salutation less friendly than forcible, that was hurled after him, they went their way towards the embarking point of the steamer that was to waft Mr. Snarry back to love and Rosherville.

Mr. Gregory Scattergood kept to his word. As soon as the family were established in their new abode, he took up his residence in one of the wings, or rather the pinions, being the extreme apartment; and having furnished it inversely, to his own liking, admitted that he was perfectly comfortable—at least, as much so as his perverted notions of gravity would permit. And he took such a fancy to Clara that he was always making her little presents, and as much as intimated that all he had in the world would be left to her. And Herbert, who was there every day, went and told the old gentleman all the news, and condoled with him upon the state of things generally, until he was no less pleased with him than with his niece.

Taught by the sharp lessons of the past, that carelessness might almost degenerate into criminality, Vincent became an altered character. He was enabled before long, through the interest of those who would have helped him

before but they mistrusted him, to gain a situation, which, although humble, with respect to remuneration at present, promised yet better things. And in a short time he presented himself at Brabants, where he was received with great amity by Mr. Grantham. It had been a hard struggle between that gentleman's pride and his better feelings to allow him to come there; but he found that Amy's affections were unchangeably fixed on Vincent; and loving her dearer than his life, he at last made this sacrifice to his daughter's happiness. And thus cheeringly—the ties becoming each day firmer, that bound the various parties together—did some months pass quickly away.

* * * * *

It is again winter. The frost has once more imprisoned in its iron grasp the marshes on which we first became acquainted with our hero. Again do the horses' hoofs ring and echo over the frozen roads; the stars twinkle with electric brilliancy in the heavens; and red warm lights gleam from the cottages upon the bare and sparkling shrubs.

There is a huge fire on the hearth of the old hall at Brabants, toying and playing lam-

bently around the dry logs, as its reflection dances on the ancient windows, and throws fantastic giant shadows upon the decaying fretted ceiling. The wind is blowing sharply without; the casements rattle, the vanes creak on the gables, and now and then a loose tile may be heard whirled down upon the ground. But all is snug within. The more fiercely the wind blows, the more brightly the fire roars up the vast chimney; any one who cared to look, might see its red sparks outside, flying high in the air.

A happy party is that now assembled in the old hall, which has been restored to a marvellous pitch of comfort. Away, on one side of the fire-place, Mr. Grantham, Mr. and Mrs. Scattergood, and the doctor from the village—a kind-hearted man, who brought almost all the inhabitants of that little world into it—have formed a rubber, sheltered from intruding draughts by a huge screen, that would take a man a long winter's night to study, so manifold are the objects of interest that adorn it. Closer to the iron “dogs” of the hearth are seated Vincent and Amy, in earnest but not grave conversation. It must

be supposed, from their low tones, that it is not meant for anybody else to hear, and is therefore interesting only to themselves; indeed it appears to be so. Herbert and Clara are opposite to them, playing at playing at chess; for no move of any consequence has been made for the last half-hour, although they have been constantly talking to each other in the same manner as their companions. And Freddy is there too, rolling about on the floor before the fire with a large mastiff, certainly as big as he is, between whom and himself there appears to exist that intense familiarity and unity of disposition, which children alone are enabled to establish with animals.

They are all happy—very happy. The hands of the old clock, in the quaint carved frame against the gallery, are creeping round towards the last hour of the year: and when it strikes, their various pursuits are suspended for mutual greetings, and every good wish for the new year that love and affection can prompt. Brighter fortunes are in store for all; and the future will derive more heartfelt pleasure, from the recollection of the troubles and anxieties of the past.

Fervent and sincere are those hopes for joy and happiness. Through the medium of our story, whose characters your favour called into being, let the same be conveyed to you, and all those for whose welfare your own wishes are offered.

Again we are called upon to say farewell; but for a brief period only. Let us, before we part, collect a little hasty intelligence of the other personages who have from time to time appeared before us.

There is a family residing in Fitzroy Square, whose governess has been changed as many times within the last six months. In consequence, the children have learned nothing, and mind nobody; they are ignorant and overbearing, keeping the house in constant commotion, and annoying every one who comes to pay a visit. Mrs. Constable sometimes regrets that she cannot find another "young person" to teach them like Clara Scattergood.

A merry party have assembled on the first floor at Mrs. Chicksand's, for Mr. and Mrs. Snarry, whom we knew as "Mrs. Hankins's sister," have returned from their wedding tour

to Dover. Mr. Joe Jollit is there, in high humour. Mr. Bodle plays appropriate airs on the piano; and Mr. Bam is deep in the concoction of a wondrous bowl of punch; while Mr. Rasselas Fipps has brought his flute, and has been playing mild obligatos to popular melodies during the evening. Mrs. Chicksand is in great good-humour, for there is prospect of many dishes left for the morrow; and Lisbeth's various Christmas-boxes have helped to deck her in a style beyond the memory of the oldest charwoman who ever came to assist on similar occasions.

Christmas is being kept everywhere, and jollily too, except by Mr. Bolt, who is keeping it at the expense of government, for some misdemeanour, on board a floating tenement in the neighbourhood of Woolwich. All the Merchant Tailor boys are happy at home, for a good three weeks. Mr. Rosset's thriving receipts have enabled him to give his *corps olympique* a general treat on a night of non-performance.

And Mr. Glenalvon Fogg has returned to town, and produced a successful pantomime over the water. His "Lee Shore" has been

played all over the country, and the money has fallen in well accordingly; whilst he has been applied to to write a piece, on its success, for one of the more important theatres. He looks more blooming, and less seedy, than heretofore; and is on the eve of taking a benefit, "at the instigation of several of his friends," at which, be sure, there will be one box, if not more, taken by certain parties. He has not yet used Vincent up, as a character in any of his dramas: he has apparently too much respect for him; "for," as he says, "a great many whom the world looks upon as loose fish, sometimes owe their name more to circumstances than a bad disposition; and have often the best sort of stuff in their hearts to work upon, after all."

MARGUERITE DE BOURGOGNE.

A TRADITION OF ANCIENT PARIS.

THE writer can claim little credit for the following tale beyond that of having adapted its incidents from the celebrated drama, "*La tour de Nesle*," by Alexandre Dumas and Frederic Gaillardet. For fearful interest and situation, the piece is unequalled ; and, although several years have elapsed since its first production, a vast audience crowds to the *Théâtre de la Porte St. Martin* whenever its representation takes place. M. Bocage was the first representative of Buridan ; and lately it was played by M. Frederic Lemaitre, the creator of Robert Macaire and Don Cæsar de Bazan.

MARGUERITE DE BOURGOGNE.

CHAPTER I.

THE TAVERN.

THE great bell of Nôtre-Dame was booming heavily across the Seine, and calling the devout portion of the inhabitants of Paris to their vespers, on a fine autumnal evening, at the commencement of the fourteenth century, as a young traveller slowly entered the city by the Porte St. Honoré.* It was a fête day, and as, in more modern times, crowds of *bourgeois*, *grisettes*, artisans, students, and, indeed, representatives of every class of society, were thronging outside the barriers to enjoy their wine, and luxuriate on their bread and melons, free of the

* “ L’ancienne *Porte St. Honoré*, située vers l’endroit, ou la rue de ce nom reçoit celle de Richelieu, fut démolie en 1631.”—*Dulaure*.

octroi, which the entrance of these commodities into the city rendered necessary. But the appearance of the traveller contrasted strangely with the holiday-clad pleasure-seekers around him. His dress was soiled and untidy, and partook more of the costume of a soldier from the Low Countries than a courtier of France; although his carefully arranged hair, which clustered in long fair curls over his high forehead, showed he had not forgotten to add to his general handsome mien and figure by a shade of *coquetterie*; and more than one damsel that he met thought he would have made a better partner at the *guinguette* than a combatant on the field of battle. Of the glances that were aimed at him, none fell home; and he continued steadily on, casting his eyes, occasionally, on either side the way, as if in search of an inn; till, at last, he stopped before a house of public entertainment, that bore the following inscription as a sign—"Au rendezvous des bons enfans. Michel Orsini donne à boire et à manger. On loge à pied et à cheval." "So," thought he, "this should be my lodging, although I doubt for to-night;" and again viewing the exterior, and reading the announcement set forth on it,

he gave his horse to the *garçon d'écurie*, and entered the public room, wherein some dozen of workmen were grouped round a table; they stared at him for an instant, as he seated himself quietly at the end of the room, and ordered a measure of wine; and then they continued their conversation.

“Ho! Master Orsini,” exclaimed one of them, a great burly figure of six feet high, with an arm like a blacksmith’s: “taverner to the devil! double empoisoner! Must we give you all your titles before you answer?”

The person addressed, who was neither more nor less than the host himself, surlily growled out, “What would you have?—more wine?”

“Nay,” returned another, “we have enough; it was Richard the *savetier* who called you; he wished to know how many souls your patron, Satan, has received this morning.” “Or, to speak plainer,” added the first, “how many bodies have been found this morning below the Tour?”

“Three,” surlily returned the host. “Three—at least I have heard so.”

“As usual,” rejoined the *savetier*, “and, as usual, also, I presume, all three young, noble,

and handsome. Were they strangers in the good city of Paris ? ”

“ Not one had numbered eight days here,” answered Orsini.

“ Thank you, taverner,” said Richard ; “ that is all we wanted, unless in your character of Italian and sorcerer, which are your attributes in Paris, you can tell us who this vampire is that requires so much young and warm blood to prevent his own from coagulating with age.”

“ I know not,” replied Orsini, in the same dogged tone.

“ No matter ; you know nothing,” returned the other : “ well, well, leave us alone, and attend to this young master, who does you the honour to call you.”

“ Master taverner,” said the stranger, speaking for the first time, “ can any of your acquaintances carry this *billet* for me to the Louvre for a few *sous* ? ” “ I can find one, *messire*,” answered the host, and beckoning one of his hangers-on he told him to do as the gentleman required. “ Listen, then,” said the stranger. “ You will take this to the Louvre, and, having asked for the Captain Gauthier Daulnay, you will give it to him ; ” and the messenger re-

ceiving the commission and its payment, departed.

“Jehan de Montlherie,” said the *savetier* to a *manant* at his side, “hast seen the *cortége* of Queen Marguerite to-day, and her two sisters, the Princesses Blanche and Jeanne?”

“That have I,” answered Jehan, “and we need not ask now where the tax is gone which was levied by our king Philippe-le-Bel of glorious memory. I saw my thirty *sous* upon the back of the Queen’s favourite. Did you mark Gauthier Daulnay?”

The stranger started as he heard the last name pronounced, and then fixed his eyes attentively on the speaker.

“Holy Virgin! have I seen him?” exclaimed Richard. “His demon of a horse caracolled so freely amongst the crowd, that he placed his hoof on my foot, and, as I cried mercy, his master, to quiet me, gave me——”

“A crown of gold?” interrupted Jehan.

“Marry, no—a stroke on the head with the pommel of his sword.”

“And you did nothing to the horse and said nothing to the master?” asked another.

“As for the horse,” answered the *savetier*,

“I valiantly buried two inches of this knife into his haunches, and he went his way bleeding ; as for the master, I called *him* bastard, and *he* went *his* way swearing.”

“Who says that Gauthier Daulnay is a bastard?” exclaimed the stranger, suddenly rising from his seat, and gazing with kindling ire on the group of talkers.

“I say so,” coolly returned the *savetier*, passing the flagon of wine.

“Then you lie in your throat, cur!” said the stranger, hurling a heavy drinking-cup at the face of the last speaker.

“Ha! struck! *Mort au mignon! Mort au gentilhomme!*” shouted the infuriated artisans, drawing their knives, and rising from the table. The stranger retreated a few steps, and throwing down a bench before him, drew his sword, exclaiming, “Holloa, my masters! mind you, that my sword is longer, and of better steel, than your knives.”

“But we have ten knives against your one sword,” cried the others, closing round him.

“*A mort! à mort!*”

The enraged artisans formed a semicircle about the traveller, who, rapidly thrusting with

his sword, was parrying, as well as he was able, the quick succession of strokes aimed at him on all sides by their knives. The contest, however, was too unequal; the odds were too strong against him, and he would probably have been overcome, when a fresh arrival turned the fortune of the contest. The new comer, on entering the room, had quietly deposited his cloak upon a table, thinking the noise arose but from a drunken brawl; though, as soon as he beheld a stranger, and that stranger, to all appearance, respectable, amongst the group of infuriated artisans, he drew his sword and charged upon them, exclaiming, "Ten against one! Ten hirelings against one gentleman—it is five too many. Back, hounds, as you value your dogs' lives!"

Whether some former meeting, or the determined appearance of the new assailant, produced so sudden an effect, we know not; but the crowd of noisy antagonists fell back immediately before him, and retired cowering to their own table.

"By my holy patron!" said the young soldier, as soon as he recovered sufficient breath to speak, "you have come at the right moment;

and I will serve you a like turn when you find occasion. Your hand."

"Willingly," said the other, returning the hearty grasp he received. "Ho! Master Orsini, bring us two stoups of wine—we must be better acquaintances. I think it is the first time, sir soldier, I have seen you in this ancient tavern. Are you but newly arrived at Paris?"

"But two hours. I am awaiting the arrival from Navarre of our King Louis the Tenth; and I have profited by his accession to return from Flanders, where I was serving."

"And I from Italy; it seems, then, the same cause draws us both here."

"I seek my fortune," said the young soldier.

"And I, also:—and your hopes of success?"

"My brother is high in the Queen's favour—his name is Gauthier Daulnay."

"You will succeed, *mon cavalier*," said the other; "for the Queen will refuse him nothing."

"I have but written to him this minute, to announce my arrival, and request he would join me here; so it is as well that I see all these vagabond assailers have dispersed. May I demand your name?"

“ My name ! say, rather, my names, for I have two : a name of birth, which is my own, but which I do not bear, and a *nom de guerre* which is not mine, but by which I call myself.” “ And which will you tell me ? ” “ My *nom de guerre*, Buridan ;—and yours is——”

“ Philippe Daulnay,” returned his companion ; and then, suddenly turning the discourse, he inquired, “ Have you any friend at court—any resources ? ”

“ They are here,” said Buridan, striking his forehead ; “ and in my heart.”

“ You reckon, then, on your address, and on love ? ”

“ I count yet upon other things. I am of the same age—of the same country—as the Queen. I was a page of Duke Robert the Second, her father, who was assassinated. The Queen and I had not, between us both, at that time, the age which each of us bears at present.”

“ And what may your age be ? ” asked Daulnay.

“ Thirty-five,” freely answered the other. “ Well, since that epoch when we were young together, there has been a secret between Mar-

guerite and myself—a secret that will kill me, *mon ami*, or will make my fortune.”

“I will drink your good fortune, then,” said Daulnay, touching his companion’s glass with his own. “And may God give it to you, also, my comrade!” added Buridan. “Mine has not commenced badly,” said Daulnay, smiling. “Already!” exclaimed Buridan, “and in what manner?”

“As I returned to-day from seeing the Queen’s *cortége*, I found I was followed by a woman. I drew in my pace, and she redoubled hers; in a minute she was close to me. ‘My young *seigneur*,’ said she, ‘there is a lady loves you—are you as brave as handsome? Are you as trustworthy as brave?’—‘If your lady,’ said I, ‘would have a heart that will brave any danger, without shrinking, to arrive at a rendez-vous, I am your man, provided always that she is young and pretty! if not, let her commend herself to St. Catherine, and enter a convent.’—‘She is young and beautiful.’—‘So much the better.’—‘She will expect you this night.’—‘Where?’—‘Be at the corner of the Rue Froid-Mantel, at the hour of curfew; a man will approach you, and say “your hand;” you

will shew him this ring, and follow him. Adieu, my soldier! truth and courage.' She then placed this ring on my finger and disappeared;" and, in proof of the truth of his story, Daulnay stretched his hand towards his companion, and shewed the costly jewel glittering on his finger.

"And you will go to this rendezvous?" asked Buridan.

"By my holy patron, that will I," returned Daulnay.

"I congratulate you," said the other; "here are a few hours only that you are in Paris, and except the tapster, Landry, who is an old companion in arms, *I* have not met a soul I know, yet I am not too old for adventures either." As he finished speaking, the door quietly opened, and a veiled female cautiously entered. On perceiving Daulnay, she hesitated for an instant, and then advanced and laid her hand on Buridan's shoulder. "Sir Captain," said a soft voice beneath the veil.

"Well, *ma gracieuse*," answered Buridan, without discomposing himself.

"I have two words to speak to you, and to you alone."

“Why not aloud? this gentleman is my friend.”

“Because,” returned the veiled intruder, “there are but two words to say, and four ears to hear them.”

“*C'est bien*,” said Buridan, offering his arm, “and now, my fair unknown, tell me these two words. You will excuse me!” he added, turning to Philippe; and drawing the lady towards the recess of the window, she began to speak to him in an under tone.

While the dialogue was going on, Daulnay had an opportunity of more fully observing his new friend. He appeared, as he had stated, about five and thirty years of age; he was, moreover, tall and well made, and his handsome doublet of puce velvet was adapted pretty closely to the fashion then in vogue. His glossy hair was arranged in the becoming style of the *moyen age*, and his eyes were of the same dark colour—soft, and almost dove-like, in their general expression; although at times, a gleam of passion shot rapidly across them, like summer lightning, and then they resumed the same calm as before. His fine figure appeared to great advantage against the mellow autumnal sunset, as he stood

in the recess of the old window; and his whole attitude was graceful and unstudied, as he bent forward to listen to his fair visitor. The conference, however, did not last above two minutes; and then the female disappeared, and Buridan returned to the table.

“Is it a dream or a wager?” said he, as he again seated himself: “this veiled beauty——”

“What of her?” asked Philippe impatiently.

“Why, she has repeated to me the self-same words which another told to you, not two hours back!” “A rendezvous?” asked Daulnay. “You have it.”—“The hour?” “The same as yours!”—“And a ring?” “The same as yours again!”—“And you will go?”

“Certainly,” answered Buridan; and then, after a moment’s reflection, he added, “these should be two sisters.”

“So much the better,” said Daulnay, laughing, “we shall then be brothers-in-law.”

They would doubtless have conversed longer upon the subject, had not the tapster, Landry, opened the door, and announced Captain Gauthier Daulnay. Philippe rose eagerly from his seat—there was a quick step along the passage,

and the two brothers were locked in one another's arms.

As soon as the first emotions of the meeting had subsided, Gauthier Daulnay, who was a perfect counterpart of his brother, (only, perhaps, with a little more refinement in his manner and toilet,) cast an inquiring glance upon Buridan. Philippe saw it, and at once introduced him.

"He is but the friend of an hour, my brother," said he, "who has rendered me a service I should remember all my life. He saved me from the knives of a dozen varlets, at whom I had launched a curse and a drinking-cup because they spoke ill of thee."

"I thank you, sir," said Gauthier, addressing Buridan with an easy and unaffected politeness: "I thank you for him and for myself. Our blood and lives shall be yours in time of need; we will give them to you as we give our hands."

"You love each other truly, *mes gentilhommes*," said Buridan, who had been looking with interest at the two brothers ever since their meeting.

"Why, captain," returned Philippe, "each to the other is all the world, for we are twins,

and without relations, with a red cross on our left arms for all token of recognizance; and we were exposed as infants, together and naked, upon the Parvis Nôtre Dame. We have known cold and famine together, and together have we seen our brightest hours. Is it not true, dear Gauthier?" and as Philippe spoke, he grasped his brother's hand affectionately, and Buridan saw that there were tears in the eyes of each; but they were not tears of sorrow.

"And, since that time," continued Gauthier, "our longest separation has been for six months only. When he dies, I will die also; for, as he came into the world but a few hours before me, I would not survive him longer. All is in common between us; our steed, our purse; in one word, our life. But I pray your courtesy, fair sir; *au revoir*, you will come with me, Philippe?"

"I am sorry," answered his brother, "I cannot join you now. I must pass a portion of this evening where I am expected."

"Arrived but a few hours, my brother," said Gauthier, "and a rendezvous! Have a care, Philippe. The Seine for some time past has been a grave for the noblest and fairest of Paris,

and, above all, its victims are strangers. Again I warn you—take heed !”

There was something solemn and impressive in the tone of Gauthier Daulnay, as he delivered this caution ; and had he been alone with his brother, Philippe would not have kept this appointment. As it was, he wavered, and, turning to Buridan, inquired if he still thought of going.

“ I have resolved,” said the captain. “ I shall go.” “ Then I go, also,” said Philippe. “ How long have you arrived at Paris ?” asked Gauthier of Buridan. “ Four days,” returned Buridan gaily ; “ and a conquest already made.” “ ’Tis strange !” exclaimed Gauthier, half speaking, half thinking : “ ’Tis strange ! Both so lately come to Paris—both young and handsome.” Then, changing his tone, he added vehemently, “ I beseech you, *mes amis*, do not go.” “ We have promised,” said Philippe ; “ promised on our honour.” “ The promise, then, is sacred,” returned Gauthier ; “ but to-morrow, brother, at an early hour, I will be with you. And you, sir,” he added, tendering his hand to Buridan, “ will be always welcome with us.”

At this minute, the curfew broke the gathering stillness of the city, and the sound, caught up from tower to tower, was soon echoing o'er all the ancient tenements and *carrefours* of Paris.

"'Tis the curfew," said Buridan, throwing his mantle over his shoulders; "I am expected at the second tower of the Louvre. 'Tis about to be an ugly night," he added, as the low roar of distant thunder mingled with the heavy clanging of the bells. "Adieu, *messeigneurs*," and he left the tavern.

"I go to the Rue Froid-Mantel," said Philippe departing.

"And I to the Louvre," said Gauthier, following their companion.

They had scarcely crossed the threshold when Orsini entered the room. He looked stealthily round, and, closing the door by which the others had departed, gave a low whistle. At its summons, Landry and three other men of dark and sinister aspect, and armed to the teeth, presented themselves. He glanced at them for an instant, and then exclaimed, in an under tone,

"And we go, *mes enfans*, to the Tour de Nesle !"

CHAPTER II.

THE TOWER.

SITUATED opposite the Louvre, on the other side of the Seine, and at the angle bounded by the river and the fosse of the enclosure formed by Philip Augustus, there stood, in former times, a tall, gaunt-looking building, termed, by the ancient Parisians, *La Tour de Nesle*, from its contiguity to the gate of the same name, by which Henri IV. entered Paris, after having besieged that city in 1589. It was composed of several irregular floors, each of which comprised the greater part of the area contained within its circular walls; and while the summit commanded an extensive view over the ground, now covered by the buildings of the tenth and eleventh *arrondissemens*, the base was washed by the river, over whose waters some of the windows of the upper apartments projected. A semicircular ditch ex-

tended behind it, on the side nearest the bank ; and, as this was unprovided with bridge or pass of any kind, the only manner of arriving at the interior was from the river by a boat.

Few of the people of Paris knew to what purpose this isolated building was applied. In an earlier period, it had been used as a depository for arms and implements of warfare ; but now, the upper windows were screened from view by projecting shutters on the outside, and massive bars crossed the lower ones, defying all entrance by that means. Dark tales, it is true, were in circulation about that old tower, and the circumstance alone of many bodies being daily found below its mouldering and time-blackened walls, had thrown an air of terror around it, which inspired those who gazed on it with a like feeling ; whilst its narrow loopholes were viewed with sentiments of fear very strongly mingled with curiosity to pry into the secrets of its solitary confines. But on the evening to which we refer, the tower was not deserted. From an apartment on the second story, leaning against an unglazed and half-bricked up casement, Orsini, the taverner of the former chapter, was intently watching the torrent beneath him. He

had placed his lamp in a recess, so that its light was nearly concealed from the eyes of any one on the opposite bank; and, muffled in a heavy cloak, he was listlessly, yet impatiently, tapping with the handle of his poignard upon the stone sill of the window. It was a wild and stormy night without. The fine autumnal afternoon had changed to a black and murky evening, and the thunder was rolling fearfully through the overcharged heavens, causing the old building to reverberate to its very foundations. Above, the lightning was playing in constant and vivid flashes, continually throwing the outlines of the higher buildings into bold relief against the illumined background: whilst beneath, the swollen waters of the rapid Seine, turbid with the refuse that it was receiving from the drains which emptied themselves into it without the walls, conjoined its angry and divided stream below the Ile du Palais, and chafed and roared like a mountain torrent against the base of the tower.

“So,” muttered Orsini to himself, as he gazed on the struggling elements, “’tis a fine night for our orgies in the tower. The heavens are black, the rain falls, the city sleeps, and

the river swells to receive its anticipated prey. 'Tis a fit time for gallantry; the roar of the thunder, and the rushing of the Seine, are mingling their sounds with the ringing of glasses and the sighs and kisses of love—a strange concert, forsooth, where the gods and demons have each their part! Ha! ha! laugh, young fools, laugh,” he continued, as a sound of merriment, proceeding from the room above him, reached his ear; “laugh while ye can. I expect you here, as I expected others yesterday—as I shall expect them again to-morrow. And yet 'tis a fearful condition, that, because they have entered here, they must die; because their lips have received and given kisses that they ought not to receive and give, they must be silenced, ne'er to re-open but before the throne of God. . . . *Tiens!* the crier of the night already returned! the hours wear on.”

As he spoke, the voice of the patrol was heard in the street, below the tower. “It is two hours of the night: the rain falls: all is tranquil. *Parisiens dormez!*”

“Ay, slumber on,” thought Orsini. “Those who now mock repose, will be locked in a deeper sleep than yours ere long. Eyes are

sparkling now, which will be dim and sunk before morning; and warm blood is running in young veins that will soon be stilled for aye. Ha! who moves there?" he exclaimed, turning suddenly round, and then first becoming aware that there was another occupant of the chamber besides himself.

At the bottom of the small flight of stairs that wound curiously up to the apartment above, stood a female, who had apparently just descended from the room whence the laughter had proceeded. Her figure was tall and commanding; but it would have been difficult to have assigned any precise age to her, so intimately did the bloom and freshness of the girl appear to mingle with the full and well-defined proportions of womanhood. Her fair and beautiful hair was hanging, half dishevelled, on her white rounded shoulders; and her blue eyes were sparkling with excitement, while the same breathing glow of warmth was diffused over her noble countenance. She carried a small lamp in her hand, and a mask hung from her arm. The rough Orsini bent before her as she advanced, for it was his Queen—it was Marguerite de Bourgogne.

"Orsini!" she exclaimed in a voice trembling with emotion, "where are your companions—are they here?"

"They are, madame, here and ready: the night advances."

"Is it, then, so late?" asked the Queen. "No, no, you are deceived. Look! how dark and still is all abroad." And, sighing deeply, she sank dejectedly on a rough bench, which formed part of the scanty furniture of the room.

"No matter, madame," returned the taverner, with the assurance warranted by a partnership in guilt; "no matter—we must extinguish the lamps, and collect the wine-cups. Your boat attends you: you must cross the Seine, and, having entered your royal dwelling, leave us masters here—the sole masters."

"Oh, no!" faltered the Queen. "Leave me, I beseech you, leave me. This night has not resembled those I have passed before; this young man resembles not the others: he is like one only that I know. Do you not find it so, Orsini?"

"Whom think you he resembles, then?" gruffly demanded the host.

"Gauthier Daulnay," answered the Queen;

“*my* Gauthier. I have looked at him often to-night, and thought I beheld Gauthier: in listening to him I thought I heard Gauthier. He is all love and passion—he cannot betray us.”

“Trust him not, though, madame,” said Orsini. “Think of him but as a childish toy, which must be played with, and then broken. Think that the greater freedoms you have allowed him, the more there is to fear. It is nearly three by the tower clock: retire, madame, and leave us this young cavalier.”

“Leave him to you, Orsini!” exclaimed Marguerite, rising from the bench. “No, no! Go and demand of my sisters, that they abandon their gallants to you: if they will, let it be so; but this one—we *must* save him. All this night I have been masked in his presence, and he would not know me again; he has not once seen my face. But, hist! he approaches. Descend to your companions; but remember—he must be saved.”

As Orsini quitted the room, the object of Marguerite’s solicitude appeared on the stairs. His countenance was wild and flushed: his foot was unsteady, and an empty goblet in his hand indicated the source of his excitement. The

Queen had not been deceived in discovering a likeness: it was Philippe Daulnay who advanced towards her; and, passing his hand round her waist, attempted to draw her towards him. Marguerite fell back, and, fixing her mask on her face, exclaimed hurriedly:—

“Young man, the day is breaking: you must be gone.”

“What concerns me the day or night?” said Philippe. “We have here neither day nor night. The lamps burn, the wines sparkle, our hearts beat, and time passes: let us return.”

“No, it cannot be: we must separate.”

“Separate! and we may never meet again. It is not yet time to part; and to divide the links of this chain is to break them.”

“You have promised to be rational,” said the Queen. “My husband will awaken: he will come to seek me. Again I tell you, it is daylight.”

“You deceive yourself; it is but the moon, gliding from between two clouds chased by the wind. Your husband will not come; age is confiding and sleepy. Still one hour, *ma belle maitresse*—one hour, and then, farewell—for ever!”

“Not one instant,” returned Marguerite. “Depart: it is I who beseech you. Go without looking behind you; without thinking more of this night of love; without speaking to a soul, even were he your dearest friend. Fly!” she added energetically; “quit Paris, and for ever—I implore you—I *command* you.”

As Marguerite uttered these last words she drew herself up to her full height and pointed towards the door. Although masked, Philippe *felt* she was looking at him, and he half shrunk before her.

“*Eh bien!*” he answered; “I will go; but your name? Oh! tell me your name, that it may whisper itself for ever in my ear; that it may be graven for ever on my heart. Your name! that I may repeat it in my dreams. I have divined that you are beautiful; that you are noble. Your name! in one last kiss, and I will depart.”

“I have no name for you,” returned Marguerite. “This night once passed, all has finished between us. I am now free, and so are you also. We are equal on the score of hours passed together, for I owe no more to you than you do to me. Obey me, then, if you

love me: obey me, if you love me not, for I am a woman; I am mistress here, and I command you to depart."

"So!" exclaimed Philippe, in a tone of irony, "I am but a woman's sport. Well, well! I go; adieu, noble and honest dame, who givest rendezvous by night, and to whom the shade of that night does not suffice for a sufficient mask. But you will not make *me* the toy of an hour's passion; you shall not say that you will laugh at the dupe *you* have created."

"What mean you, sir?" said Marguerite, half alarmed at his determined tone, and recoiling as he approached her.

"Fear not, madame," he answered, snatching a pin from her hair; "it will be less than nothing: a scratch, a mere simple sign by which I shall know you when we meet again." And, as he spoke, he thrust the pin through her mask against her forehead. "Now tell me your name or not: take off your mask or remain concealed, I care not, for I shall recognise you."

"You have wounded me, sir!" exclaimed the Queen, starting back, in a tone wherein fear and rage were strangely mingled. "You

have wounded me, and the consequence be on your head. Fool! fool! I would have saved you, but it is too late: you shall *not* know me even now." And she caught up the lamp, and hastening up the staircase, left Philippe Daulnay in total darkness and alone.

For a few minutes all was still; the dead quiet of the chamber was broken but by a stealthy footstep, now and then, on the floor above, and the rushing of the Seine, as it chafed against the worn and rugged base of the tower. The storm had subsided; and a few stars were appearing in the heavens, but not sufficient to dispel any of the gloom that pervaded the interior. As he groped his way towards the window, in the hope of discovering some means of egress, a sound fell upon his ear as of a door opened on rusty and long unused hinges. The next moment he heard footsteps, and before he could challenge the intruder, a hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Who is there?" exclaimed a voice at his side.

"*C'est moi*," answered Philippe; "but what matters it to you?"

"I should know that voice," returned the other. "'Tis Philippe Daulnay."

"Buridan ! you here too !" said Philippe, as he recognised his companion of the evening.

"Yes, *sang Dieu !*" returned the captain ; "and would to God we had met at another spot ! Know you not where we are ?"

"Nay ; I would ask you that question. I know not even our entertainers, although ere long, I trust to find them out."

"How mean you ?"

"Easily, forsooth. I have marked my fair lady's forehead with a sign she shall not easily wash off. Her mask was not proof against steel."

"Imprudent boy !" said Buridan. "'Tis plain you know not our present situation, or you would have been more careful."

"In the name of our Lady, then, where are we ?" eagerly demanded Philippe.

"Approach the window," said Buridan, leading him towards it. "Now strain your eyes through the darkness, and tell me what you see on the opposite bank."

"'Tis the Louvre."—"At your feet." "The

Seine." "And around you the Tour de Nesle!" exclaimed Buridan, as a cold shiver ran through his companion's frame. "Yes," replied Buridan; "tis indeed the old tower, beneath whose walls bodies are found every morning."

"And we are without arms—for they, doubtless, demanded your sword on entering, as they did mine."

"Of what use would they be here?" said Buridan. "Flight is our resource from the assassins—not combat. Thanks to the Virgin, the moon has re-appeared, and we can search an outlet easier than before."

While he was speaking, the clouds, which had long obscured the light, passed away, and the moon poured her silver stream into the interior of the apartment, revealing two small doors in the wall that had hitherto escaped their observation.

"Ha!" exclaimed Buridan; "there is still a chance, look you—to the door—quick, quick!"

"'Tis fastened," said Philippe, as he tried the handle.

"Force it, then, force it," returned the other; and as Philippe retreated, he applied his foot heavily against it. The door yielded to his

efforts, for the hinges were old and rust-worn ; and, as it gave way, a blast of cold air rushed into the room.

“ It opens but on the river,” said Philippe, in a tone of disappointment, advancing to the door, and gazing on the swift waters beneath him. “ I could stem no torrent such as this. Let us try the other door, by which, doubtless, you came here : whither does it lead ?”

“ To your death, if you enter it again. I passed three men-at-arms on my way hither from the *salon*, where we have been so strangely entertained ; but they were sleepy with wine, and heeded me not : it is lighter also, now—it will not do to attempt.”

“ And I cannot swim,” added Philippe sadly.

“ But I can,” said Buridan ; “ nay, I will ; and we may yet obtain aid.”

“ ’Tis a fearful leap,” said Philippe advancing towards a small wooden balcony, which was erected outside the door.

“ But I will take it,” answered Buridan, coolly dispossessing himself of his doublet, which he flung over the rails. “ Stop,” he added, as he hesitated an instant on the threshold ; “ should I perish, Philippe, and you

escape, avenge me. If, on the contrary, I am saved, and you fall, I will go to your brother Gauthier, and tell him; but you must write it: there must be proof."

"I have neither pen, nor ink, nor parchment," said Philippe sorrowfully.

"Take these tablets, then," returned Buridan, drawing a small book from his vest. "You have, in your hand, a woman's hair-pin; in your arm are veins, and in those veins, blood. If I should be saved, and you perish, I will take these tablets to your brother. Write, then, and he will believe me; write, and I will demand vengeance for you."

To strip up his sleeve and pierce a vein, was, to Philippe Daulnay, but the work of an instant. He leant forward in the moonbeams to obtain more light, and awaited the dictation of Buridan.

"Write," said the captain, "these words:— '*I have been assassinated by . . .* I will place the name, for I shall recognise your hostess by her wounded forehead, sooner or later. And now, Philippe, if I die, do for me as I would have done for you. Adieu! seek flight by whatever means you can, but linger not here."

As Buridan finished speaking, he scaled the

balcony, and leapt fearlessly into the torrent. It was a fall of some twelve or fourteen feet, and he sank deep into the water at first; but when Philippe saw him again he was gallantly breasting the stream across the river.

And now, with desperate activity, Philippe rapidly tried every aperture and recess of the apartment, but in vain: all were firmly closed. The staircase alone remained. Swiftly mounting its narrow and winding steps, he pushed firmly against the trap-door that closed its entrance. It yielded—a ray of hope sprung up—he could, perhaps, escape that way; but, as he rose through the opening, an arm seized his collar, and forcibly thrust him back.

“Orsini!” he exclaimed, as he recognized the taverner. “Unhand me; or at least allow me to meet you on equal chances.”

But the clutch of the other tightened, as he spoke, with suffocating power round his throat, and his utterance was checked by the grasp. Collecting all his strength, he seized the assassin by the belt, and attempted to pull him down. In so doing, his foot slipped on the stairs: the sudden jerk, occasioned by this accident, was too quick and powerful for Orsini to resist; and

falling through the trap upon Philippe's shoulders, they rolled heavily down the staircase into the apartment he had just quitted. The shock separated their hold on each other for a moment; but they were instantly again on their legs, as their headlong career was stayed. A fearful struggle now ensued; for each was equally powerful and unarmed. Rushing on Orsini with the spring of a tiger on his prey, Philippe passed his arms round the other's waist, and, grasping the balustrade, against which he had driven him, pressed the taverner with all the strength he could throw into his young and robust frame, between his own body and the staircase. In vain Orsini writhed in his powerful grasp. The blood purpled in his face; his mouth opened; his blackened tongue protruded, and his glaring eyeballs appeared ready to burst from their sockets, as his respiration became stifled by the hug of his antagonist; whilst a crimson froth oozed from his lips and nostrils. Had they been alone, without doubt a few minutes longer would have ended the struggle; but the companions of the taverner had followed them closely down stairs, and began to tear Philippe from his hold. Their

united efforts dragged him off; not, however, without the rail of the staircase in his hand, and he was hurled to the other side of the room. In an instant, he had seized the bench (which we have before spoken of as one of the scanty *ameublemens* of the chamber), and launched it forcibly against his opponents. One of the party fell; and Philippe would have possessed himself of his arms the next instant, when Landry, raising a heavy axe, dashed it on his head, splitting his skull like an egg-shell before it. As the unfortunate victim fell, crushed and bleeding, upon the ground, the voice of the crier was again heard beneath the windows, as he uttered, "It is three hours of the night. All is tranquil. *Parisiens, dormez !*"

CHAPTER III.

THE BOHEMIAN.

BRIGHTLY and merrily did the glorious sun throw his first rays over the ancient city of Paris, on the morning after the events of the last chapter; whilst his beams were cheerfully reflected from the glittering vanes of the Sorbonne, and the tower of La Sainte-Chapelle, destroyed by fire some three centuries afterwards,—the old pointed minarets of the Palais de Justice, and the Tour d'Horloge, where the first great clock ever known in Paris was set up in 1370,—the summits of the churches of St. Gervais, St. Germain-des-Prés, St. Pierre de Chaillot,* and many other antique and

* At the date of our legend (A. D. 1313), there were only nine churches in Paris: *viz.*, Nôtre-Dame, Saint Gervais, Saint Pierre de Chaillot, Saint Médard, Saint Nicholas-du-Chardonnet, La Sainte Chapelle, La Sorbonne, Saint Germain-des-Prés, and Saint Nicholas-des-Champs.

gilded spires that then rose above the neighbouring buildings. The storm of the preceding night had so cleansed the usually dirty streets, that their rough pavements shone again with whiteness; and all the bustle and activity of the day was proceeding gaily, under the cheering aspect of the unclouded sky that spread its blue vault equally over all. The noble and artisan alike felt its influence; but the sunbeam that poured its joyous flood of light into the humble *mansarde* of the industrious grisette, intruded with a mellow and darkened ray through the rich curtains of the bed-chamber of the Queen of France.

Marguerite slumbered—the deep and heavy sleep of morning rested on her veiny eyelids, and enthralled her fancy by its mysterious power; linking together those wild and unconnected thoughts that flit across the visions of the early dreamer. Her repose, however, was not undisturbed, for her parched and fevered lips, from time to time, muttered some incoherent words, and the apparel of her couch

The names of the last two indicate their rural situation at their foundation. The number of churches in Paris, at present, is between forty and fifty.

was confused and in disorder; while her beautiful hair, escaped from all confinement, wandered negligently over her pillow and fair bosom, whose violent and rapid heavings betokened much internal emotion.

But Marguerite was not the sole occupant of the chamber. Resting on a rich *fauteuil*, at the foot of the bed, sat Gauthier Daulnay, silently contemplating the sleeping form of his beloved Queen. He had arrived before the crowd of courtiers, who every morning attended Marguerite's *réveil*; and was now anxiously waiting until she might awake, and receive those oft-repeated expressions of allegiance and endearment that it was his constant habit to offer.

"Have the spirits of heaven watched over the couch of my Queen, and given her peaceful slumbers and golden dreams?" asked he, as Marguerite at length opened her large blue eyes, and turned them languidly towards him.

"I have had dear visions, Gauthier," returned the Queen, as she extended her white hand for him to press his lips to: "I have dreamt of meeting a young cavalier who resembled you—was I not happy? He had your

soft low voice—your eyes—the same fond expression”—

“And this vision, fairest ! how ended it ?”

“Let me remember, Gauthier,” said Marguerite, passing her hand across her forehead, “for I am scarcely yet awake, and my ideas are vague and confused. This dream, then—oh ! it had a terrible *dénouement*—I thought I was wounded in the face.”

“In effect, madame,” said the favourite, “you are hurt : there is blood upon your forehead.”

“Yes, yes : I know—I remember now,” returned the Queen, speaking rapidly with a tremulous accent. “A gold hair-pin from my head-dress has rolled off upon my pillow during the night, and it has scratched me—it is no more. But your brother, Gauthier—you will present him to me this morning, will you not ? I love him already for your sake.”

“Keep your love for me alone, my beautiful Queen,” answered Gauthier ; “for I should be jealous, even of my brother, although he is my second existence.”

“And the first ?”—

“Is yourself, *ma belle maîtresse*,” returned

the young courtier with warmth; "or, rather, you are my life—my soul; and in the throbbings of your heart I have learned to count my own. If you loved as I do, you would shew me more affection—you would be all to me, and to me only."

"No, *mon ami*, no," said the Queen; "leave me, I beseech you, a chaste and pure love. Remember, that one indiscretion, nay, one single word, is fatal to Queens; and content yourself with loving me, Gauthier, and with knowing that I love to hear you say so."

"The King returns to-morrow," said Gauthier sadly.

"And with him," added the Queen, "an end to our long and happy interviews. But let us speak of other things—what noise is that without?"

"'Tis the approach of our young lords to attend your *réveil*."

"They must not wait, then, or they will think I care not for them. I shall see you again with them, shall I not? Go, Gauthier, and join them, and, remember, if it was love that formed the kingdom of our beautiful France, you would be my only master—my only king."

A gay crowd of nobles and courtiers greeted Gauthier warmly as he entered the antechamber upon leaving the Queen's apartments; for he was known to be the favourite, and, indeed, his open-hearted, and generous demeanour, had gained him many friends.

"Give you good day, Gauthier," said the Count de Savoisy, advancing and offering his hand. "How fares this morning the Marguerite of Marguerites, the pearl of pearls, the Queen of France, Navarre, and Bourgogne?"

"I know not, monseigneur, for I am but even now arrived, and I expected to find my brother amongst you. Monsieur de Pierrefonds, is there aught of news this morning?"

"Nothing of consequence," returned the courtier. "They have found another body in the Seine this morning, below the tower."

"The Seine is a babbler," rejoined Savoisy, "that does not keep the secrets which are confided to it. At two o'clock this morning, I passed the Louvre, and some of the windows of the Tour de Nesle were brilliantly illuminated: it must have been a *fête*-night in the tower.

"I love not much that dark mass of stone,"

said Pierrefonds, "which appears during the night like an evil genius, watching over the city, and casting fire, at intervals, from all its openings, like an outlet of hell ; with the dark sky above it, and the river bubbling at its feet. If you knew the stories which the people relate"—

"You forget, messieurs, that it is a building belonging to the palace," said Gaulthier.

"Besides which," added Savoisy, "the King arrives to-morrow, and he is not fond of news that he has not made himself. Is it not so, Monsieur de Marigni?"

It was to the prime minister of France that this question was addressed, as he entered the apartment, to join the throng of nobles there assembled.

"What said you to me, Savoisy?" he inquired. "Repeat it, that I may answer your question."

"I merely said," returned the other, "that the people of Paris were a people but too happy in having Louis the Tenth for a monarch, and Monsieur de Marigni for prime minister."

The arch expression with which Savoisy ac-

accompanied this ready subterfuge, and the smothered tittering of the courtiers, would have betrayed him, had not the announcement of the Queen's arrival called away the attention of Marigni. As Marguerite entered the chamber, radiant with beauty and dignity, the crowd of nobles bent before her, and, under the double influence of majesty and loveliness, offered up their usual oaths of duty and allegiance.

"I do not see your brother, Seigneur Gauthier," exclaimed the Queen, after she had briefly replied to the compliments and flatteries of her courtiers. "You were to have brought him with you—was it not so?"

"I am most uneasy on his account, madame," answered Daulnay. "Oh! this cursed city of Paris, so full of Bohemians and sorcerers. . . . You need not shrug your shoulders, Monsieur de Marigni: I do not accuse you of negligence, for the town, increasing as it does, may well escape your vigilance. They have again found a mangled corpse below the Tour de Nesle, this morning!"

"They have found two, sir!" said Marigni coldly.

"*Two!*" exclaimed Marguerite involuntarily, but in so low a tone as to be unheard.

"And who, think you, commits these murders," asked Gauthier, "but the Bohemians and sorcerers, who have need of blood for their dreadful orgies? Do you think they can force Nature to reveal her secrets, without some horrible incantations?"

"You forget, Messire Gauthier," said the Queen, smiling, "that Monsieur de Marigni does not believe in necromancy."

"And yet, madame," said Savoisy, who had been standing in the recess of the window, "we have but to cast our eyes into the street, and we shall see nothing but these same sorcerers. Even now, there is one in front of your palace, who seems waiting that we should consult him, for he has marvellously fixed his eyes on this window."

"Call him hither, then, Seigneur de Savoisy," said Marguerite gaily; "I should like to know what will happen to our minister on the King's return."

"Come up here, Bohemian," cried Savoisy from the window, delighted at the prospect of annoying Marigni. "Come up here, and lay

in a stock of excellent news on your way, for it is a Queen that desires to know the future."

"Messieurs," exclaimed Marguerite, "we must receive this great magician with due solemnity."

"Decidedly," returned Savois; "but as his knowledge can come alike from the gods and the demons, at all events we will cross ourselves. But he is here—*par Dieu!* he must have walked through the walls."

As he spoke, the Bohemian entered the apartment, with a firm and measured step, and, slightly inclining his head to the Queen, remained standing at the door. His tall and commanding figure was closely shrouded in a cloak, beneath whose ample hood he likewise concealed his face.

"Cursed Bohemian!" said Savois, approaching him; "the Queen has sent for you in order that you may tell our prime minister"——

"If you wish me to speak to him, allow me to approach," interrupted the magician, passing towards the premier. "Enguerrand de Marigni, I am here."

"Listen then, sorcerer," said Marigni, in his

usual cold, calm tone ; “ if you wish to be welcome, you will announce the heaviest disgrace, or death, which may be impending for me ; and you will see that your predictions will fall as unheeded on my ear, as they will astonish those around me.”

“ Enguerrand,” returned the gipsy solemnly, “ I have but one disgrace, and one death to announce to you ; but the one will be speedy and the other terrible. If you have any account to render unto God, I warn you to hasten, for you have but three days left to settle.”

“ Thank you, Bohemian,” answered Marigni with affected gaiety. “ I know not if I have but three hours, neither do you. But others wait to question you—again I thank you ;” and Marigni turned towards the window, biting his lip.

“ And now, Gauthier Daulnay,” resumed the Bohemian, “ what wish *you* to know : at your age the past is but as yesterday—the future as to-morrow.”

“ Well, sorcerer, tell me of the present,” said the Queen’s favourite, “ what passes in my mind at this instant ?”

“ You expect your brother,” returned the seer, and he comes not.”

“ And my brother—where is he ? ”

“ The people are crowding towards the banks of the Seine ; they surround two corpses, and cry ‘ *malheur !* ’ ”

“ Bohemian ! what mean you ? ”

“ Descend—run to the *Grève*, and there inspect the left arm of one of those unhappy ones : there will then be one voice more to cry ‘ *malheur.* ’ Ah ! you take me now.”

Had an earthquake shivered the costly and gilded walls of the royal Louvre at his feet, Gauthier Daulnay would not have quailed more than he did, before the last words of the sorcerer. Then, starting wildly from the circle of nobles that surrounded him, he violently thrust open the door of the ante-chamber with one blow of his arm, and rushed down the tapestried staircase, exclaiming, as he ran, or rather flew, across the court, “ Philippe ! my brother ! they have murdered thee ! ”

The courtiers, astonished at the scene which had just passed, had collected into little groups, and were about to discuss the probability of the prediction more carefully, when the Bohemian, approaching the Queen, said to her, with a rapid utterance :—

"Is there nothing Marguerite de Bourgogne wishes to learn? or, does she believe that I can tell her nothing? Thinks the Queen that a royal life is superhuman, or that mortal eyes cannot read it?"

"I wish to know nothing, Bohemian," returned the Queen, "nothing."

"And yet," rejoined the sorcerer, boldly placing his foot upon the first step of the throne, "you have made me attend here. Marguerite! I will compel you to hear me. Queen of France! you mistrusted the news when you heard that two bodies had been found below the Tour de Nesle this morning: did you not expect *three*?"

"Silence!" exclaimed the Queen; "Silence! or tell me whence this power of divining comes."

The Bohemian placed his hand in his breast, and drew thence a gold hair-pin. "Behold my talisman, Marguerite. You shrink from me—you carry your hand to your forehead. I have finished. And yet," he added, after a moment's pause, "I would tell you one word more; but it must be to you alone. Seigneur de Marigni, you must retire."

“ Bohemian,” returned the minister, “ I receive no orders but from my Queen.”

“ Retire, then, I beseech you, if it is but for one instant,” said Marguerite, to the astonished premier.

The Bohemian bent his head towards Marguerite so closely that their faces almost touched ; and then whispering, in a low, rapid voice, “ You see, Queen, that I know all : that your love—your honour—your life are in my hands. Marguerite ! this night I shall expect you, after the curfew, at the tavern of Orsini. We must meet there—and alone.”

“ Is it proper for the Queen of France to meet a stranger alone, and at that hour ? ” asked Marguerite, trembling with emotion.

“ It is nearer to the Porte St. Honoré, than to the Tour de Nesle,” coldly returned the Bohemian.

“ I will come then, sorcerer ; on my royal word, I will come.”

“ And you will bring a parchment, and the state seal. From thence you will be at liberty to return to your own palace, which must, for to-day, be closed to everybody, and above all to Gauthier Daulnay. I may expect you, then.”

"I have told you I will come," returned Marguerite, passing hurriedly to her chamber : and the Bohemian walked calmly through the circle of nobles to the principal door of egress ; and, waving his hand to the astonished and petrified group, departed.

"Messeigneurs," said Savoisy, as the door closed on the strange visitor, "have you seen aught like this ? Is it a fiend, or a man, that has been amongst us ?"

"What can he have told the Queen ?" wondered Pierrefonds.

"Monsieur de Marigni," continued Savoisy, "you were close to Marguerite : did you hear what passed between them ?"

"I probably did, messieurs," was the reply ; "but I remember only that which concerns myself."

"Tis well," said Savoisy ; "and will you believe henceforth in sorcery ?"

"Why more than before ? He has foretold my disgrace, and yet I am still minister : he has foretold my death—*vrai Dieu*, messieurs, if one of you wishes to assure himself that I am still living, he has but to say so. I have

a sword at my side, which can answer for its master."

The bitter tone in which Marigni delivered this last speech, threw a silence over the whole party ; and they were separating with the exchange of cold and unmeaning salutes, when a hurried step was heard upon the staircase, and immediately afterwards Gauthier Daulnay, pale and disordered, rushed into the room.

"Justice ! justice !" he exclaimed, precipitating himself into the midst of them. "It is my brother, messeigneurs, my brother, Philippe, the only relation I have in the world, that they have murdered. He is drowned—assassinated—at the *Grève* ! Give me his murderer, that I may tear his heart from his warm and living bosom, and cast it, bloody and quivering, in his face. His assassins—Savoisy, Pierrefonds, do you know them ? Oh ! answer me ; by our Lady, speak !"

"Gauthier, you are mad : be calm," said Savoisy, approaching him.

"Stand off !" he shouted in a voice of thunder ; "I am not mad. I will give my rank—my blood—my gold, to him who shall

name his murderer. Monsieur de Marigni, have a care, for it is you who must answer for this. You are the guardian of the city of Paris; not one drop of blood is spilt—not one murder is committed, but it stains your fame. Where is the Queen? I must see Marguerite, and she will give me justice. My brother! my brother!”

“Gauthier,” exclaimed Savois, “my friend”——

“I have no friend,” interrupted Daulnay: “I had a brother, and I will have that brother living, or his assassin dead. Marguerite! Marguerite! It is I, Gauthier Daulnay—*your* Gauthier, that demands entrance;” and he beat his clenched fist violently against the door of the Queen’s apartment.

“You cannot pass, sir,” said the captain of the guard, intercepting him.

“It is I, Joannes,” replied Gauthier, “*I* can pass. Marguerite, the Queen, will see me, I tell you, although all else be denied. Stand back, varlets, or, by our holy Lady, you shall repent this interference.”

He drew his sword, and again advanced towards the royal apartments, when the guards,

seizing either arm, closed around him, and drew him forcibly from the door. With a sudden and violent spring he cleared himself from their hold, and then, laughing wildly and hysterically, fell senseless on the floor, with the blood streaming from his mouth and nostrils.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

THE most important part of ancient Paris was comprised, at the period we write of, within the limits of the Ile de la Cite, which divides the Seine into two separate streams above the Pont Neuf; and the Louvre, far from being the centre of the city, as at present, was situated nearly at its extremity. The space now included in the sixteenth *arrondissement*, between the Rue du Coq, St. Honoré, and the Rue Fromenteau, as well as the present Place du Palais Royal, formed the gardens of the Louvre; and these communicated with the straggling Rue St. Honoré by numerous private gates and alleys; the whole being surrounded by a deep fosse, which was filled by flood-gates from the Seine.

It was through one of these portals, as the last echoes of the sullen curfew died away upon the

night breeze, that Marguerite passed on the evening of her strange interview with the Bohemian. Although closely screened from observation, by the voluminous folds of an outer mantle, she shrank instinctively from the gaze of the passers-by, whom she encountered on the rough foot-track; and on arriving at Orsini's tavern, which we may place on the site of the corner of the present Rue Richelieu, she hurried through the low dirty passages, with a facility that proved she was not altogether unacquainted with the localities. No one appeared to oppose her progress, and she entered the room in which the unfortunate Philippe Daulnay had been assailed by the workmen the day before. By the dim light of a lamp which flickered on the table, she perceived a man rise to meet her as she tremblingly approached—it was the Bohemian.

“You have done well, madame,” said he, in the same deep voice of the morning. “I had begun to doubt your word; but you are here, and ’tis well.”

“At least, Bohemian,” returned the Queen, “you will acknowledge it as an act of condescension on my part.”

"It matters not whether you came here through fear or condescension," returned the sorcerer, unconcernedly, divesting himself of his robe and a false beard, and placing them on the table; "for me your presence is sufficient."

"You are no Bohemian!" exclaimed Marguerite, as the stranger threw down his mock attire.

"No, *par la grace de Dieu !*" returned he, resuming his seat. "I am a Christian; or, rather," he added mournfully, "I was once: it is long since I have known either hope or faith. But let us speak of other things."

"They who address me, are generally standing and uncovered," said the Queen, haughtily.

"I will speak to you, then, standing and uncovered," returned the stranger, as he rose from his settle; "but it is because you are a woman, Marguerite—not because you are a Queen. Look around you; is there one sole object that reminds you of your rank? Are these blackened and noisome walls those of a regal apartment? Is this smoky lamp—this broken table, the furniture of a Queen's boudoir? The sole occupants of this room are a man and a female;

and, since the man is tranquil and collected, and the female pale and trembling, it is the man that reigns.”

“Mysterious being!” returned the Queen; “whence comes your conviction that I am in your power, or that my woman’s heart thus quails before you? Who art thou?”

“Who am I, Marguerite?—I am called Buridan, the captain. You ask me why I know you are in my power: how is it that the Seine gave up but *two* of the bodies of its victims this morning?”

“But the third?” demanded the Queen, anxiously.

“The third still lives—he is before you!”

“’Tis impossible!”

“And yet ’tis true,” coldly returned Buridan. “Last night, three ladies and their cavaliers assembled in the old tower. The ladies were the Princess Jeanne, the Princess Blanche, and the Queen Marguerite: their companions were named Hector de Chevreuse, Buridan the captain, and Philippe Daulnay.”

“Philippe Daulnay!” exclaimed the bewildered Marguerite.

“Ay, Queen: it was the brother of your fa-

yourite Gauthier, who caused the wound which yet shows on your pale forehead."

"You are playing a deep game," said the Queen, after a few moments' dead pause, during which both parties had eyed each other steadily, unwilling to break the silence. "You are playing a deep game, messire; but you have miscalculated your chances. Dark adventurer! I have but to utter three words without, and, in an instant, Buridan, the captain, will have rejoined his companions of the tower."

"Do so, madame," replied the other in the same undaunted voice; "and to-morrow morning Gauthier Daulnay will read some tablets, which I sent to him this day, by a monk of St. François; and which he has sworn to open, if he does not see a certain traveller whom he met in company with his brother at this tavern. That traveller is myself, Marguerite; and if I fall by your hirelings, Gauthier will not see me, and he will know all."

"And think you," asked the Queen, "that he will believe your writing more than your words?"

"No, Marguerite: but he will believe the writing of his brother: he will believe his bro-

ther's last words, written in that brother's blood, and signed by his hand ; he will believe all, when he reads, *I die, assassinated by Marguerite de Bourgogne*. Now, proud wanton, am I mad ? am I a rash adventurer ?”

“ If this were true !” replied Marguerite.

“ It is true,” interrupted Buridan, sternly. “ Your fate is in my hands—the destiny of the Queen of France is in the power of the unknown wanderer ; yet the Queen may trust him if she chooses.”

“ What wish you as the price of your secrecy ?” eagerly demanded Marguerite. “ Will you have gold ?—the treasury is in your hands. Do you wish the death of an enemy ?—my guards are at your orders. Are you ambitious ?—I can give you rank—titles. All this you may demand, were I to melt my sceptre and the crown to satisfy you.”

“ Enguerrand de Marigni is prime minister of France,” was the reply. “ I would have his place and title ; although it is over his body that I must enter the palace.”

“ You shall have them,” returned the Queen, eagerly. “ You have seen that my word is sacred.”

“And I will leave you your lover, and keep your secret safely. One thing more: you have parchment and a seal—I demand the arrest of Marigni, and an order for his execution.”

With a trembling hand, the Queen rapidly signed the fatal document, and returned it to the captain.

“*C'est bien,*” said Buridan, as he folded up the order of arrest, and placed it in his bosom. “Farewell, Marguerite; and to-morrow you may expect me at the Louvre.”

As he finished speaking, he took up his mantle and departed, leaving Marguerite alone in the inn chamber. For a few minutes after he had left, she remained in the same fixed attitude; and then, as her natural firmness returned, she began to reflect on what plans she could contrive to thwart Buridan's expectations. Rage, at being thus braved by an unknown wanderer, was mingled with a deep feeling of anxiety at the situation in which she was placed, and she almost condemned herself for conceding to his demand so readily; although, the next instant, she became well aware how useless it would have been to oppose him. But one chance was left; and that was, if possible, to see Gaul-

thier Daulnay before the morrow, and, by her influence, or entreaties, to obtain possession of the tablets. With this view she prepared to return to the Louvre, in the hope of finding him still there; but as she was about to quit the apartment, she heard approaching footsteps, and her mantle was scarcely well arranged to conceal her form, when a man hastily entered the room: a single glance assured her that it was her favourite, although he was pale as death, and his eyes crimson and inflamed with weeping.

“Gaulthier!” exclaimed the Queen, as she rushed towards him, and threw herself in his arms.” “It is my good angel that has sent thee hither at this moment.”

“The Queen at Orsini’s tavern, and after curfew!” said the young courtier, no less astonished than his mistress at the unexpected meeting. “In the name of Heaven, Marguerite, how came you here? I have sought you vainly all this long sad day to demand justice; and I wandered hither in the expectation of learning from Orsini how I might see you, for I knew he was in your confidence.”

“And I am here, Gaulthier,” replied the Queen, “that I might send Orsini to search

for you ; for, before our separation, I would bid you farewell."

"Farewell ! sayest thou ?" said Daulnay, confusedly passing his hand across his forehead. "Pardon me, Marguerite, I implore you ; but I am scarcely sane. One sole idea pursues me ; I see but one object ; and that dreaded vision is my brother's corpse, wounded and mangled, exposed at the Grève."

"I have given orders that the murder shall be investigated," replied Marguerite. "I swear that your brother shall be avenged ; but the King returns to-morrow, and we must henceforth be separated."

"How ! parted ?" returned Gauthier. "Oh ! Marguerite, my thoughts are as a stormy night, which the lightning has illumined for an instant, but to leave in deeper gloom. What mean you ?"

"That we must part to-morrow. Wherefore has another sentiment arisen to fill the breast of my Gauthier, which yesterday throbbed for his Marguerite alone ? Does it beat for another ?"

As the Queen spoke, she placed her hand on Gauthier's chest, as if to count the pulsations of his heart ; but it was with another object.

"You have some tablets here, Gauthier," said she: "whose are they?"

"They are the property of a gentleman whom I have seen but once—whose name even I know not; but I met him yesterday, at this tavern, with—with my poor brother."

"Do you think I will believe that story, Gauthier? They are the depository of some *gage d'amour* from one of the women of my court. But of what import," she added haughtily, "can this be to us, who are about to part for ever? Adieu, Gauthier Daulnay; keep your new love."

"Marguerite! do you wish to drive me mad? I have come here, broken-hearted, to seek some consolation, and you talk to me of an eternal separation. Wherefore must we part?"

"Louis suspects us," replied the Queen, as a slight sneer passed over her beautiful lip: "he suspects us, and it is enough. But why grieve, messire? have you not these tablets to console you for my loss?"

"And you really believe they are a woman's gift?" demanded Gauthier.

"You would have shewn them to me an hun-

dred times ere this, had they not been so," replied the Queen.

"I have told you, Marguerite, that they are not my own. I have sworn on my honour not to open them until to-morrow, or to return them unto him who sent them. I repeat, I have sworn it."

"And have I violated no oath for thee, insensate, in loving you as I have done? But no matter, all is now past between us:—once more, adieu!"

"Marguerite! in the name of Heaven—"

"Honour!" continued the Queen, laughing scornfully, "*the honour of a man!* And is a woman's honour, then, nothing? It may be true you have sworn an oath unto your equal; but every thought of you has made *me* forget a vow made unto God; and yet," she continued, dropping her voice, "and yet, Gauthier, I would forget that vow again—nay, more, if you beseeched me, I would forget all the world for you."

"Then, why wish that we should separate?"

"I have promised it to the sacred powers above: still," and she appeared to hesitate—"still, if I were sure these tablets were not

a rival's, I would brave all for you, Gauthier—even the anger of those holy powers, as I have braved that of man; for think you the court believes in the purity of our love? I implore you, Gauthier—on my bended knees I implore you, shew me these tablets, and if I am but satisfied, farewell power; farewell reputation: I will give up all—all for thee.”

“And you will do this, Marguerite?” asked Gauthier, wavering, and overcome by the Queen's impassioned accents. “And will you return them to me by sunrise to-morrow morning?”

“You may trust me—you have proved my faith before.”

“Then, take them,” he continued, and, as Marguerite received them from his hand, he added, “Holy Virgin! pardon, pardon! Is it an angel, or a demon, that can thus lead me to perdition?”

“You have acted nobly, my Gauthier,” said the Queen; “and now, concerning your unfortunate brother? Nay, start not, *mon ami*, for inquiries have been already made, and with a clue.”

"Whom suspect they?—in the name of our Lady, tell me."

"A foreigner who has arrived here, but some few days, and who will present himself at court to-morrow for the first time."

"His name?" gasped Daulnay.

"Buridan, if my memory serves me," replied the Queen. "I have known it but this night, and I have not given the order for his arrest by my guards."

"Then give it me, I beseech you, Marguerite. The order! Quick, quick! or he may yet elude my grasp. I will follow him to the world's end, ere he escape me, when once upon the scent. Were he even at the foot of the altar, I would tear him away."

The Queen approached the lamp, and, tearing away one of the tablets, which she still held, pencilled thereon a few words, and delivered them to Gauthier, exclaiming—

"Behold the arrest! Now, Buridan, boast—anticipate—gloat on your future greatness—your life is in my hands!"

CHAPTER V.

THE DUNGEON.

IF the crowd of gay butterflies and sober moths that, in the shape of courtiers and ministers, fluttered every morning about the Louvre, had been astonished at the passing events of the antechamber the day before, they were much more confounded at the changes which took place on the morning subsequent to the Queen's visit to Orsini's tavern. Marigni, the cautious and wily minister, had been arrested at the palace-gates by Buridan, who was a comparative stranger to the majority of them; and, before his guard had left the courtyard with their prisoner, Gauthier Daulnay had ordered Buridan to the dungeons of Vincennes, by the Queen's warrant, on the charge of murdering his brother. Savoisy in vain attempted to gain some information or elucidation of these strange

changes; and, having questioned every one, from the *arbalétrier* at the gates to the page in the council-chamber, concluded by expressing a wish that Satan might invite him to a banquet at the Tour de Nesle, if he knew anything about it.

The castle of Vincennes, to whose safeguard Buridan had been condemned, was an irregular building, or rather a cluster of irregular buildings, surmounted by a number of tall, slender towers, situated about four miles east of Paris. The visitor to Père la Chaise may yet see its white walls glistening in the sun, as he stands on the level before the chapel of the cemetery, and turns his back upon the city. His guide will, perhaps, tell him that it was there Louis IX. administered justice to all, under an oak in its then fair park; and that there our own Henry V. breathed his last, and the ill-fated Henry VI. was born. Although not regularly used as a prison until the time of Louis XI., it became the occasional place of confinement for state prisoners, during the earlier reigns; and its low vaulted dungeons, encompassed by walls sixteen feet in thickness, which are still existing, fitted it for the purposes of torture and assassination.

In the deepest of one of these cells, bound in darkness, and alone, 220 steps below the surface of the ground, lay the Captain Buridan. Although deprived of light and air, his bold, undaunted spirit was as free as ever; and he had still a well-lined purse in his girdle, which he had determined upon using to the best advantage. He was aware escape was next to impossible; but another plan presented itself, which, if carried out, would place his enemies once more comparatively in his power, and he accordingly employed the night in maturing it. The next morning, as the *guichetier* entered with his coarse allowance of daily food, he was surprised to find that honourable post filled by no less a person than Landry, whom he had before known as the drawer at Orsini's tavern, and as one of the Queen's creatures, liable to serve her in all situations, from the prison to the palace.

"It appears you have enough upon your hands," said Buridan; "yesterday assassin at the Tour de Nesle, and to-day gaoler at Vincennes."

"I am seldom unoccupied," returned Landry, drily.

"And yet, can you do nothing for me—can

you not even procure me a certain confessor that I shall name to you?"

"I dare not," returned the gaoler; "but I can listen to your confession, and repeat it to the priest, word for word; or, if you have a penitence to make, on the faith of a soldier, I will undergo it for you."

"Tush!" said Buridan, "this is but idle jesting. Can you feel in my girdle, and take out the purse of gold you will find there?"

An answer was not needed—in an instant the purse was in Landry's hand.

"How much earn you a year in your present employment?" asked Buridan.

"But six poor livres," was the reply.

"And in that purse are 200. Now, listen, Landry. You must waste thirty-three years of your life in a prison, as the slave of Orsini, the hireling of a murderer, to gain an equal sum. Swear to me, on your eternal salvation, to do as I bid you, and it is all yours. 'Tis all that I possess—had I more, I would give it to you."

"But what will become of you, *mon capitaine*? I cannot save you."

"It is probable that they will hang me," replied Buridan coolly. "If that is the case,

the executioners will bury me at their own expense, and I shall have no need of money. On the contrary, if I am spared, you shall have four times that sum, and I a thousand."

"And what have I to do for this?" demanded Landry.

"That which will give you little trouble. You must leave Vincennes, and, once out of the prison walls, you must never again enter."

"I ask no better fate."

"You must go and lodge with Pierre le Bourges, the taverner, near the Innocents. You must ask him for the captain's chamber, and he will give you the one I inhabited."

"If that is all, there appears to be no great difficulty about it," said Landry, counting the money in his pocket.

"Listen," resumed Buridan. "When once installed in that chamber, you must carefully fasten the door, and count the small tiles which pave the floor, beginning at the corner where you will see a crucifix (Landry crossed himself). On the seventh square—mind now, the seventh—you will perceive a small cross. You must lift up the tile with your poniard, and, under a bed of sand, you will find a small iron box, of

which the key is in that purse. There is no gold in it—you may open it, an' you please. And now, Landry, mark me; if, to-morrow, at the hour of the King's entry into Paris, you do not see me return safe and sound—if I have not said to you, 'Return me that box and its contents,' you will place them both in the hands of Louis X., King of France; and, if you do that, you will have avenged me."

"And do I run no other risk?"

"None."

"Then you may count on me:—by the name of our Lady, I swear this!"

"And now, Landry, adieu. You have the means of avoiding crime; be honest, if you can."

"I will do what lies in my power, *mon capitaine*," said the gaoler, departing; "*mais c'est bien difficile*."

"So," cried Buridan, as the door hoarsely closed upon Landry, and he heard his retiring footsteps, "it is accomplished. Now let the torturer and his minions come, for vengeance is seated on the rack, and I shall die content. Vengeance! joyous and sublime word, when uttered by a living mouth:—alas! how sonorous

and vain it falls over the tomb of the senseless corpse that sleeps within its sepulchre !”

The day sluggishly wore on, and the captive, half unconscious of its progress, still remained in the same attitude, pondering on the chances of escape which circumstances might afford. The only means by which he was enabled to mark the progress of the hours, were the monotonous and deadened chimes of the rusty *donjon* turret-clock, which were conducted by the mass of brick-work to his deep vault, and which he was sensible of, rather by their vibration than their sound. No ray of daylight had ever entered that dungeon since the hour when its cells were first covered over by the builder's care ; the faint and sickly mould clung to its damp walls and ceiling, and its floor was moist with the oozing land-springs, and the slime of the noxious and loathsome reptiles that crawled about it. The lamp, which Landry had left on his departure, struggled to throw a feeble glimmering around, but it could scarcely contend with the heavily-laden atmosphere ; and, after burning gradually with a dimmer and dimmer light, a faint halo of pale blue flame was all that remained at last to mark its situation.

For some hours, Buridan remained in deep thought; and then, wearied and overcome with fatigue, both of body and mind, his ideas became confused and indistinct, and he sank into a deep sleep. But his visions were not of his prison, for his persecutors could not restrain his spirit; and it wandered freely, once more, over the rich green pastures and sunny skies of his native Languedoc; and he was once more young, and guileless, and happy. Years of laughing misery and deep iniquity had passed since the beautiful accents of the south flowed in their natural and mellow richness from his tongue; and soft and gentle feelings, unclouded by remorse or interest, had long been strangers to his bosom; but, as he slept upon the damp straw which formed his couch, the scenes of his innocent childhood rose up again, in smiling array before him, and he forgot all else of sadness and anxiety, in the beaming and happy visions of the past.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DISCOVERY.

THE evening of the day subsequent to the arrest of Buridan found Marguerite at the gates of the Château of Vincennes. With the exception of Orsini, she was unaccompanied; but, as there were few of her dark plots that the artful taverner had not some hand in, and, moreover, as he filled the not-to-be-coveted office of governor of the dungeons, she was fain to have his society on the present occasion. An indefinable curiosity had driven her to seek an interview with the prisoner, before the death which she had determined should await him: his mysterious conduct and strange intimacy had beaten her usually acute conjectures, and she had resolved upon having a final meeting with him.

It was with a mingled feeling of fear and expectancy, that she descended the rugged and

uneven steps that led to the dungeon; and the grating of each ancient door, as it was successively unlocked by Orsini, and closed behind them, did not tend to relieve her anxiety. On arriving at the portal of the *cachot* where the prisoner lay, she hesitated an instant to collect her fortitude, and then bidding Orsini wait her return without, she advanced alone into the dungeon. Her victim had just awoke from his slumber, probably aroused by the approach of the Queen; and, as he shaded his eyes from the light of the lamp which she carried, he quickly demanded "who went there?"

"One whom you have met before," replied Marguerite, as she placed the lamp upon the floor. "Did you not expect me?"

"I knew you would not let me die," was the answer of Buridan, as he recognised the Queen, "without enjoying your triumph—without letting me know how abjectly I was in your power. You are right—Marguerite—I *did* expect you."

"And without hope," returned the Queen, "was it not so? You knew me too well to think that, after you had brought me to your

feet, and degraded me to entreaty, I should shew you mercy. Your measures were deeply planned, Buridan; but you forget that when love once enters the heart it displaces all other sentiments, at the expense of honour and of life—that man's resolves melt as snow before the ardent breath of woman. Behold this precious page of the tablets—the last farewell from one brother to another, and which that brother has given to me! With its flames expire your last hope;" and, as she ignited the paper from the lamp, she added, "Now, imbecile, am I free? Can I do with you as I wish?"

"What wouldst thou do, Marguerite?"

"Are you not arrested as the murderer of Philippe Daulnay? What punishment do they, in general, assign to murderers?"

"The tribunal must hear me, before I am condemned."

"A tribunal! you are mad, Buridan. Think you that men, possessing secrets like your own, are ever brought to trial. There are poisons so violent that they destroy the vessel which contains them, and your secret is one of these. The walls of this dungeon can stifle cries of the sharpest agony: a priest and an executioner

are at my bidding; and, to-morrow morning, when the gaoler descends with your food, he will return affrighted, and say that you have strangled yourself: a proof that you were guilty."

"You are frank with me, Marguerite, and it is well," replied Buridan, with a sneer. "We are old friends, and concealment is unnecessary between us."

"You jest, insensate animal! or, rather, you wish to jest," returned the Queen. "Your pride is stung by my victory, and you would have me believe that you have yet some means to escape me. But no, Buridan, you are mistaken; I tell you again, it is impossible. You are firmly bound—these walls are thick and solid, and the doors firm;—you cannot thwart me now. Adieu! Buridan, and commend yourself to our Lady. Have you aught else to speak of to me?"

"One thing only—'tis a solitary *souvenir* of my youth, which you will, perhaps, be interested in hearing; attend. Twenty years ago, in 1293, the rich vineyards and the golden hills of Burgundy were governed by our beloved Duke, Robert II. That gentle Prince

had a daughter, young and beautiful, possessing the form of an angel, but with a demon's heart,—she was called Marguerite de Bourgogne. The Duke had also a page, equally young and handsome, with a more candid and confiding spirit: he was named Lyonnet de Bournonville. Ah! methinks you listen with more attention now."

"What mean you to recount?" demanded the Queen eagerly.

"You shall see—it is a *bizarre* and curious history. The page and the daughter of the Duke loved each other dearly, and unknown to a soul but themselves. Each night, a ladder of silken rope conducted the lover to the bower of his young mistress, and each night they formed an appointment for the succeeding one. One day Marguerite announced, in weeping accents, to Lyonnet de Bournonville, that she was about to become a mother.—Aid me to change my position, Marguerite; I am fatigued and cramped."

The Queen stooped and assisted Buridan to move, as he had desired; had she looked in his face, she would have seen a smile playing upon his lips.

“Thank you, Marguerite,” said Buridan, as he changed his position. “Where was I?”

“You spoke of the Duke’s daughter about to become a mother,” returned the Queen anxiously.

“Ay, ’twas so. Eight days afterwards, her father discovered her secret, through the medium of the domestics, and, in bitter wrath, he informed his child, that on the morrow the doors of a convent should close upon her as those of a tomb, never more to re-open in this world. That night the two young lovers met: it was a dreadful meeting—a night of curses and imprecations mingled with the terms of affection and endearment. Oh! how the young Marguerite then promised to be what she has since become.”

“Go on—go on, I beseech you,” exclaimed the Queen. “Yet stay, these cords bind your limbs too tightly; they will hurt you. There—they are loosened.”

“She held a poniard,” continued Buridan composedly, without appearing to regard the Queen’s exertions to relieve him. “She held a poniard, as you now hold one, to sever these cords; and she said, ‘Lyonnet, if my father

were to die before to-morrow, I should not fear the convent: we should never more be separated, and we should live for love alone !’

“I know not how it happened ; but the poniard passed from her hands into those of Lyonnet: her arm led him through the darkness to her father’s chamber, and, when the curtains were raised, the armed page and the sleeping Duke were face to face. It was the fine head of a noble old man that Lyonnet gazed upon ; but he was fascinated by the glance of his young Marguerite, as the bird is by the fabled serpent of the East, and he knew not what he did.”

“He assassinated him !” interrupted the Queen.

“It is too true,” replied Buridan ; “and Marguerite, the young and beautiful Marguerite, escaped the convent, and she became Queen of France and of Navarre. On the following day, the page received a letter and a purse of gold, by a man named Orsini : Marguerite had written to beseech him to withdraw himself from Burgundy for ever, for, after their common crime, they could not meet again. ’Twas an imprudent act ; for that letter, in her own

writing, and signed by her own hand, could reproduce the crime in all its details."

"Well, Monsieur," replied the Queen, in a tremulous accent that too well betrayed her emotion, "and what then? Lyonnet departed, and he was never seen again; it is not known what became of him. What, then, has the Queen of France now to interest her in common with this history?"

"Lyonnet de Bournonville is *not* dead, Marguerite; and the letter is the first petition that will be offered to-morrow to Louis X., King of France, as he enters the city of Paris."

Pale and trembling, Marguerite sank from the stern glance of Buridan, and regarded him for a few seconds with quivering lips, and a bosom heaving with conflicting passions. "You say that to frighten me, Monsieur," she at length faltered out: "this is not true—it cannot be."

"Marguerite," returned Buridan, in a tone that thrilled through the inmost chambers of her soul, "you have told me the punishment of murderers; know you that of parricides? They will pluck off morsels of your white smooth flesh with red-hot pincers; they will tear your heart

from your warm and living bosom; they will burn it, and cast its ashes to the wind, and for three days your body will be dragged on a hurdle through the city."

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the agonised woman.

"To-morrow," continued Buridan, "every one will be saying, at Paris—'Buridan, the murderer of Philippe Daulnay, has been strangled in his dungeon;' but another cry will answer from the Louvre—it will be, 'Marguerite de Bourgogne is condemned to the question as a parricide.'"

"Buridan, mercy! I implore you, speak not thus loudly."

"The walls of this dungeon can stifle cries of the keenest agony," said the other, ironically repeating the Queen's words. "I am not Buridan," he continued, starting wildly on his feet, "I am the page of Marguerite—the assassin of her father!—I am Lyonnet de Bournonville!! You know it; for I saw you quail at the remembrance, as I recounted the history of your crime."

"What wish you? in the name of our Lady, what wish you?" asked the Queen, in a low

stifled voice, as she leant against the damp wall for support, covering her rich habits with the mould of the dungeon.

“You will enter Paris to-morrow on the King’s right hand : is it not so ? I would ride with you on his left, and when this letter is presented I will receive it ; shall I not be prime minister ?”

“But Marigni still lives, and——”

“Yesterday, at the tavern of Orsini, you swore that he should die, and you shall keep your oath. One more question, Marguerite. The children of our fatal intimacy, where are they ?”

“I confided them to a dependant,” returned thy Queen ; “but I forget his name.”

“Think, Marguerite,” said Buridan sternly ; “think, and you will recollect it.”

“I believe,” replied the Queen, hesitating, “that he was called Orsini ; but he is not here.”

“’Tis false !” exclaimed Buridan ; “you never let him quit you when there is aught of crime upon the *tapis*. Summon him to my aid.”

The Queen went to the door and called her minion : he had obeyed her instructions in wait-

ing for her return, and he entered almost immediately.

“Orsini,” said Buridan, “I have sent for you to know, by the Queen’s order, in what way you obeyed the commands of Marguerite de Bourgogne, relative to two children that she committed to your charge.”

“Pardon, Monseigneur,” replied the taverner, falling on his knee, for he was awed by the stern manner of Buridan; “pardon me, that I did not kill them, as I was commanded to do.”

“It was not I that gave that order, Lyonnet,” said Marguerite.

“Silence !” exclaimed Buridan in a voice of thunder, “and heap not fresh perdition on your black and perjured soul by these weak lies. What did you with the children, Orsini ?”

“I had not the courage to slay them,” answered the taverner. They were two boys—so feeble, yet so handsome ! . . . I gave them to one of my people to expose in the streets, and I said that they were dead.”

“And this man——”

“Is at present one of the gaolers of this prison ; he is named Landry. Of what other service can I be to you, Monseigneur ?”

“Take up your lamp, and go before us, for the steps are worn and difficult. My arm is at your service, Madame,” he added, addressing the Queen.

“Whence go we, Lyonnet?” asked Marguerite, as they departed.

“To ride together in the *cortège* of Louis X., who will to-morrow enter his good city of Paris.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHILDREN.

WERE we engaged in writing the chronicles of the pageants and processions of *la vieille France*, we could well devote one chapter to the account of Louis's gorgeous entry into Paris. But we have another task to perform—our tale is one of deep and fearful passions, and, as we approach its dark and impressive *dénouement*, we would not lengthen it by any comparatively extraneous detail. It will suffice to say, that the array of armed knights, and fair ladies, and snorting horses, was magnificent and imposing ; and that the multitude, having jostled, and pushed, and shouted in the streets until they were quite hoarse and tired, betook themselves to the different *marchands de vin*, in the vicinity of the Louvre, to canvass over what fresh changes were likely to take place, and how it

was that the stranger, Buridan, had ridden on the King's left hand, as prime minister, whilst Marigni had that morning exchanged places with him at Vincennes.*

On the evening subsequent to the King's opening council, Marguerite and Gauthier Daulnay encountered each other, by accident, in the gardens of the palace. The favourite was chafed and irritated; he had gained no clue towards the discovery of his brother's assassin; but, on the contrary, had seen his reputed murderer raised from the dungeons of a prison to one of the highest powers in the realm. Letters patent from the King had likewise been conveyed to Gauthier, at the close of the council, by an officer of the court, conferring on him the government of Franche Comté, with an order annexed, that he should quit Paris on the morrow to take possession. He had indignantly torn the document to pieces, and its

* Enguerrand de Marigni was finally executed on the famous gibbet of Montfauçon, which he had himself constructed, and of which he was the first victim—the *last* was the good Coligni. He was condemned “par ordre du Roi Louis-le-Hutin, à l’instigation d’un de ses courtisans.” — *Epitome Historial des grandes Chroniques de France*, fol. 63.

morsels were scattered about the walk. Little passed between the Queen and her courtier but discontented and angry speeches; and she was not sorry when the trumpets summoned Gauthier, as captain of the guard, to his duty; more especially as she perceived the new premier advancing towards the area of their conference by another *allée*.

"I crave your pardon, Marguerite, for interrupting your farewell," said Buridan; for his quick eye had detected Gauthier in conversation with the Queen, from the windows of the palace, and had led him towards them.

"They were no farewell speeches that passed between us, Lyonnet," replied the Queen. "There is no occasion for them." "How so, Marguerite?" "Because he is not going to leave us."

"But the King has ordered it in council."

"And I forbid it. I promised that you should be minister, and I have kept my word; on the other hand, you swore to leave Gauthier with me, and now you require his exile. He shall stay."

"Have you forgotten, then," inquired Buridan, "how deeply you are in my power?"

"You cannot crush me, without falling by the same blow," returned the Queen coldly.

"And yet that thought would not have stayed me yesterday," was the reply.

"Yesterday," said Marguerite, "you had all to gain, and nothing to lose but life. To-day, with your existence, you would lose rank—fortune—power. Listen, Lyonnet: we are arrived together at the edge of a deep and fearful precipice—we should sustain, rather than threaten, each other."

"You love this boy, then?"

"More than my life; but my love for him is pure and chaste as the Alpine snow."

"A pure love in the heart of the Queen of France!" said Buridan, with asperity. "I had thought that you might wring it, without pressing out one human sentiment."

"If it is not love," replied Marguerite, "invent some other name for my weakness; but I beseech you, let him not depart."

The prime minister returned no answer, but stood with folded arms and downcast eyes, impatiently beating the ground with his foot.

"What say you, Lyonnet?" demanded the Queen: "you answer not."

“Marguerite !” returned Buridan, with warmth; “if the remembrance of what I once was to you, renders intolerable the thought that you love another; if what you have mistaken for love, or vengeance, or hatred, was but an affection which I could not stifle, but which reproduced itself under all these forms; if I can prove this—nay more, if I can prove that all my endeavours have had but one end, and if I deliver up to you those proofs; tell me, if you find this devoted love still resting in my heart, will you not consent that Gauthier Daulnay departs?”

“Do you speak sincerely, Lyonnet, or are you jesting with me?”

“You must give me a rendezvous to-night, Marguerite, and to-night I will return you those letters. But let it not be a rendezvous of threats or hatred, as those of the tavern and the dungeon. It must be a meeting of love and trust, and to-morrow you may deal with me as you choose, for I shall be in your power.”

“Supposing that I consent; even then I cannot see you in the palace.”

“But you can quit it as you please, and the Tour de Nesle is still your property.”

“I will meet you, then, Lyonnet,” returned the Queen, after a minute’s reflection. “It is a strange emotion — a feeling you might deem me incapable of knowing; but the sight of you has recalled so many moments of bygone happiness—the sound of your voice has awakened the vibrations of so many chords of love in my heart, which I thought long since stilled for ever, that I cannot refuse you. I will come.”

“And will Gauthier depart to-morrow, Marguerite?”

“I will tell you all anon; but we must now separate. Here is the key of the staircase of the tower: until this evening, then, farewell.” And the Queen and minister returned by different avenues to the palace.

Let not the reader think, from the dialogue we have just recorded, that a better feeling was arising in the breast of either party. Each had departed, firmly bent upon destroying the other; and while Marguerite summoned Orsini to her own apartment, and bade him attend, with four armed assassins, at the Tour de Nesle that evening, Buridan and Savoisy met in the council-chamber, and the courtier received orders from the minister to repair, at nightfall, to the tower

with his guard, and arrest all whom he might find there, whatever might be their rank or title.

The ruddy and mysterious twilight of an autumnal evening had begun to creep over the city, when Buridan, as we shall still call him, left the palace, and proceeded to the tavern of Pierre de Bourges, where he had appointed Landry to meet him and restore his precious box. He had previously despatched a billet to Gauthier Daulnay, requesting that he would come to the same spot before curfew, upon some urgent business ; and he now hurried along the darkening and narrow streets of Paris towards the tavern. Upon entering his old lodging, he found the worthy ex-gaoler of Vincennes true to his appointment ; and, with a stoup of wine before him, and the box on the table, he was counting a few coins in his hand, and ruminating on the probability of his being able to lead an honest life in future.

“ We are well met, Landry,” said Buridan, “ and you have kept your word. In return, here are your twelve marcs of gold,” he continued, laying the purse upon the table.

“ And here is your box, *mon capitaine*. I have

done well to sell an old iron case for so much; and now I can safely lead a reputable and joyous life. I should say my salvation is certain, provided that I can occasionally burn a Jew, or strangle a Bohemian, to accomplish my duties faithfully."

"I have given a rendezvous," said Buridan, "to a young man at this tavern, and I expect him every moment. You must leave this room for a short period, and as soon as you have seen him depart you may return, as I have yet need of your services."

"*Par Dieu!*" said Landry, as a noise was heard upon the landing, "he has followed you pretty closely, for he is now endeavouring to break his neck upon the staircase;" and, as he quitted the chamber, Gauthier Daulnay entered by another door.

A cold and haughty salute passed between the rivals; and then the favourite, in a formal tone, requested to know for what purpose Buridan had required his presence.

"I bear a message to you from the Queen," replied the other: "she is unwilling you should give up the command of Franche Comté, by remaining in Paris out of respect to her, for

she appears to have but little regard now left towards you."

"Explain yourself, Buridan," replied Gauthier, staggered at the announcement.

"I should have thought you knew my real name and title by this time," said Buridan. "You are aware it is Lyonnet de Bournonville, who is prime minister of France."

"I care little what name they have given you, or by what title you call yourself. I demanded an explanation of your dark hints, and I await it."

"Calm yourself, *enfant*," returned Buridan, "and torment not your sword in its sheath, in that fashion." He continued, in taunting irony, "Marguerite is a beautiful and impassioned creature, is she not, monsieur? What said she when you demanded of her how she came by that wound in her forehead? Without doubt she has written to you since concerning it?"

"What mean these presuming queries?" demanded Gauthier angrily.

"She can paint love and passion in burning and endearing terms, can she not?" continued Buridan, in the same style.

"Your accursed eyes have never gazed upon

the sacred writing of the Queen — you are mad.”

“Do these remind you of her?” said Buridan, opening the box, and taking out the letter and the lock of hair. “When you linger near her — when you inspire the air which she breathes — when you forget all others but yourselves, is it not thrilling to pass your hand amongst the long soft tresses that flow so voluptuously on her warm and rounded shoulders, and cut off a lock like this?”

“It is her writing!” exclaimed Gauthier, almost involuntarily, as he gazed upon the evidences Buridan was displaying: “the very colour of her hair, too! you have stolen this letter, villain: you have snatched that tress by surprise.”

“Ask her concerning it yourself, deluded one,” said the minister. “She has given a rendezvous this evening to one of the Court — will you meet and confound her?”

“The place? Tell me, that I may confirm your falsehood, or her disgrace.”

“At the Tour de Nesle,” said Buridan: “the hour of meeting has arrived, and the key is in my possession. Take it, and be speedy: — yet stay; one word more.”

“Speak!”

“Marguerite de Bourgogne is the murderer of your brother.”

An exclamation of mingled agony and surprise, which resembled the howl of a tortured animal, rather than the voice of a human being, burst from Gauthier's lips, as he hurriedly quitted the room, and in two minutes more he was hastening wildly along the banks of the river towards the tower.

“So,” thought Buridan, as he departed: “go, rash fool! rejoin your ladye-love, and perish with her together. Savoisy will make strange prisoners to-night, if he is as punctual as they be. And now but one sole object remains to interest me—it is to discover some clue to my unfortunate children. What, ho! Landry!”

The ex-gaoler of Vincennes entered the room immediately; without doubt, he had been employed at the key-hole during the past interview.

“How long would it take a young man to go from here to the Tour de Nesle?” he inquired.

“Provided he cannot get a boat,” returned Landry, “he must go up to the Pont-aux-Moulins, and that will be half an hour's journey.”

"*C'est bien*," replied Buridan. "Put the hour-glass on the table, and seat yourself before that flask of wine. I would talk to you about your old campaigns in Italy."

"Ah, captain!" said Landry, as he took his place at the table, and filled his goblet; "they were rude wars, but glorious days for a young soldier, nevertheless. I remember well the wine of the rich prior of Gênes, that we drank to the last drop; and the convent of young girls that we carried off to the last nun. All those things are joyous souvenirs, but they are terrible sins, captain."

"On the last day," said Buridan, "they will put your sins on one side of the balance, and your good deeds on the other. I hope you will have enough of the latter to outweigh the former."

"I have done many good actions—very many," said Landry, as he finished a cup of wine.

"Recount them to me for my edification," said Buridan.

"At the trial of the Templars," said Landry gravely, "which was held at the commencement of this year, they wanted a witness to help

the side of the godly to triumph, and to condemn Jacques de Molay, the grand master.* A worthy Benedictine taught me a false testimony, which, for a marc of gold, I repeated word for word; and on the following day the heretics were burned, to the great glory of our holy religion.”

“Continue, *mon brave*: have you not some story about two infants that Orsini——”

“I know what you are about to say,” interrupted Landry. “Ay, ay; they were two little things that Orsini told me to throw into the water, as if they had been blind kittens; but I could not wait until nightfall, having other affairs, so I exposed them on the Parvis-Nôtre-Dame, where they generally place these little creatures.”

“And know you not what became of them?”

“No, i’faith not, but I know that somebody took them, because at night they were gone.

* “Philippe le Bel pour faire condamner les Templiers, employa des formes qui outragent également la justice et l’humanité. Le 11 Mars, 1314, Jacques Molay, grand maître, et Guy, commandeur de Normandie, en protestant de leur innocence furent brûlés vifs à Paris.”—*Dulaure, Per.* 8.

I marked them, too, to know them again in case I should ever see them. They cried a great deal, to be sure, but it was for their good."

"And this sign——"

"I scratched a red cross on their left arms with my poniard!"

"A red cross!" exclaimed Buridan, starting up; "a cross on the left arm, and alike on each?" Landry! for our Lady's sake, tell me it was not a cross you made—that it was not on the arm—that it was some other sign!"

"It was a red cross," said Landry gravely, "I have told you so."

"*Justice de Dieu!*" cried Buridan, in accents of piercing agony. "They are my children! Philippe! Gauthier! One assassinated by *her*, and the other about to fall by *my hands!* Landry, where can we get a boat, that we may arrive at the Tour de Nesle before that young man? Quick, quick—there is life and death upon our speed."

"You shall have one instantly," replied Landry, alarmed at the consternation he had caused. "There is a fisherman close to the tavern, who will lend us his craft."

"Hasten, then, Landry, and there is my

purse for you, if we arrive before him. Yet stay—procure a ladder, some ropes, and a torch, for we may want all.”

“Whence go you, captain?” demanded the astonished vassal, as he followed Buridan from the room.

“To the Tour de Nesle!” was the reply.

The required articles were speedily procured from the master of the tavern; the boat was unmoored, and the minister and the gaoler were soon whirling, in their frail craft, down the rapid waters of the Seine.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DENOUEMENT.

FROM the busy haunts of the city, and the crowded and glittering halls of the palace, we will once more change the scene of our tradition to the lonely precincts of the Tour de Nesle. The time is an hour after curfew, and the place is one of the circular interiors of the building; but the apartment had not the bare and dismantled appearance of the other chambers of the tower; on the contrary, the sides were covered with gorgeous tapestry; furniture of the most rare and costly make decorated the room; and luxurious couches, covered with the richest velvet of Genoa, were ranged against the walls.

On one of these last, pale and anxious, with her hands clasped together to form a pillow for her head, reclined Marguerite de Bourgogne. Every wave of the angry Seine, as it threw its troubled waters against the base of the tower,

aroused her for an instant from the position she had assumed; and the occasional sighing of the wind, sweeping in its melancholy course through the unglazed windows of the upper stories of the building, appeared to her imagination fraught with fresh scenes of strife and bloodshed. Her usual attendant, the taverner, Orsini, was at his old post at the casement of the apartment; and he was intently gazing along the river, or endeavouring to detect the sound of the splash of oars amid its angry chafings.

“Can you see aught in the darkness, Orsini?” inquired the Queen, in a low broken voice, as if she feared the response.

“There is nothing,” replied the taverner, in his usual short, gruff tone; “nothing. It appears there will be no blood shed here to-night, and, in sooth, there has been enough.”

“It is a last necessity, Orsini,” returned Marguerite: “it is, I know, another murder; but it is *the last*.”

“Has this man a demon at his command, that he is thus apprised of all our actions?”

“It matters little how he has learnt it: it is sufficient that he knows all. He has brought

me on my knees before him like a slave: he has seen me loosen the thongs that bound him; one by one; and he has had the imprudence, after all his boasted power over us, to demand an interview at the Tour de Nesle."

"He has invited himself to his own funeral," said Orsini, inspecting the point of his dagger; "and yet, I hope, 'twill be the last; for I tire of this perpetual bloodshed."

"It *will* be the last," replied the Queen; but our tranquillity in this world demands the sacrifice. While he breathes I am neither mistress of my power or my life: but once dead—I swear to you there shall be no more nights of orgies in the tower, nor shall they find more bodies in the Seine. I will give you gold enough to buy a province, and you shall return free and wealthy to your beautiful Italy: I will rase the tower to the ground: I will build a monastery on its site; and I will endow a community of monks to pass their lives kneeling on the cold pavement, and praying for me and for thee."

"By what means will he arrive here?" said the taverner coldly, in answer to the Queen's rapid speech.

“ He will come by the great staircase of the tower.”

“ And there are no others to follow him?”

“ I swear it. Hark ! hear you nothing on the river?”

“ There is a boat containing two men, at the bottom of the tower,” replied Orsini, looking from the window.

“ One of those must be he,” returned Marguerite hurriedly. “ Quick ! place your hirelings, for you have no time to lose ; and fasten the door after you, that he may not enter here. I would not see him again alive, or his life might yet be saved by some fresh secret.”

The taverner departed ; and, as the heavy bolts closed the door upon his egress, Marguerite sank back upon her gilded couch, overcome by her intense emotions. But her solitude was of short duration : the instant that Orsini quitted the room, she heard a low grating noise at the window ; directly afterwards, a shadow appeared on the outside, and a heavy blow was dealt against its thick mullions, that shook the very room. Another and another succeeded ; the frame gave way : the casement shivered into a thousand pieces upon the floor,

and Buridan leapt through the breach, thus formed, into the chamber.

"Marguerite!" he exclaimed, as he advanced towards her, "and still alone: our Lady be praised!"

"*A moi!*" cried the Queen, as she retreated towards the door, in the hope of summoning Orsini to her assistance.

"Fear nothing," said Buridan hastily; "you shall know all directly; but I must first speak with you. Every instant that we are losing is a treasure cast into a bottomless gulf."

"Have you come to utter some new threat, or to impose some new condition on me?" gasped Marguerite.

"I tell you, you have nought to fear. I have no sword or poniard, and your letters are beneath my vest. You may kill me if you please—you may burn the evidences, and you may then sleep calmly on my tomb. No, Marguerite; I come not to menace you: I come to tell you that there are days of happiness yet in store for us: *even for us*, who thought each other cursed for ever."

"Speak, Lyonnet: I know not what you mean."

“Marguerite, remains there nothing of the woman in your heart—nothing of *the mother*? You, whom I once knew so pure—have you nothing left that is held sacred by God or man?”

“Hast *thou* come to talk to me of virtue or of purity?” asked the Queen, with bitterness.

“Suppose that nothing has passed between us for these last three days. Forget all, except your ancient trust and confidence towards me:—have you no wish to confide to any one all that you have since suffered?”

“Oh! yes, yes,” replied the Queen, speaking rapidly, and in impassioned accents; “it is not to a confessor that the like secrets are told. I had but one accomplice in all my crimes—it was yourself!”

“I, Marguerite?”

“Yes, Lyonnet, yes: all my sins are in my first error. If you had not seduced the young and thoughtless girl, the first and most horrible crime would not have been committed; for, lest they should suspect me of the murder of my father, I destroyed my children. Followed by remorse, I again flew to crime for refuge: I tried to stifle, in blood and revelry, that

voice that whispered 'Parricide!' incessantly in my ear. There was not one thing around to recall me to virtue. The mouths of my courtiers smiled, and said that I was beautiful; that the world was made for me, and that I might destroy it for a momentary pleasure. Yes, you are right, Lyonnet; it is but to an accomplice that things like these can be confessed."

"Yet, tell me, Marguerite, if your children were near you ——?"

"My children! I dare not pronounce those words. Amidst the pale and ghastly apparitions that have nightly stood around my couch, I have not seen my children, and I tremble now to name them, lest I should invoke their shades."

"And yet, when they were near you, did nothing tell you that they were your offspring? Wretched mother: you saw one of them begging for mercy against the poniard of the assassin. You were there, you heard his entreaties, and you did not save him!"

"Lyonnet! what mean you?"

"You saw him bleeding at your feet—at the place where we now are, but three nights since."

“Philippe Daulnay!!” shrieked the Queen.
“*Vengeance de Dieu!*”

“Marguerite,” said Buridan sternly, “behold the fate of one. Where is the other? the lover of the Queen of France!”

“Oh! no, no!” exclaimed his agonized companion; “thanks to Heaven I can still call Gauthier my son. By the blood of his martyred brother, that flowed where we now stand, I swear it.”

“Is this true, woman?”

“Oh, yes; it is the hand of God that hath directed all this—that infused this strange affection for Gauthier into my heart. It was a mother’s love, Lyonnet, and that alone: I feel it all now, and we may still be happy. See, Lyonnet, I am in tears—it is long since I have thus wept. Holy Virgin! I thank thee;” and the Queen covered her face with her hands, and, sinking on her knees, poured out her gratitude to Heaven for its intervening power.

“Do you still look upon me as an enemy?” said Buridan, as he gently raised her in his arms. “Do you forgive me now? Think you that we can still be happy?”

“Can I be happy, Lyonnet?” returned Marguerite, clasping her arms with impassioned energy around his neck: “need you ask it? All the affection I had for you, when I was still a pure and guileless girl, has returned, and we will once more live for each other as in old and happier times. Whom want we now to witness our attachment but our child—*our* Gauthier?”

“And he is coming. I sent him the key of the tower which you gave me, and he will arrive here by the great staircase.”

“Malediction!” exclaimed Marguerite, starting from the embrace of her lover. I have placed assassins at the door, for I expected you would ascend by that passage!”

As she yet spoke, the clash of swords resounded from the landing, and a piercing cry, succeeded by a confused struggle, followed. The sounds approached nearer and nearer. Marguerite shrieked, and ran wildly towards the door. “They are murdering him!” she exclaimed.

“Who has thus closed this entrance?” said Buridan, as he shook the door violently, on withdrawing the bolts. “It is fastened on either side.”

"I ordered it," cried the agonized Queen, as she vainly beat her white hand against the oaken panels. "Orsini! Orsini! strike him not, I command you. It is I—Marguerite!"

"*Porte d'enfer;*" shouted Buridan, as he hurled the massive slab of a marble table against the door. "Demon! Orsini! it is my child!" With a loud crash, the door yielded to the missile, and, as it burst open, Gauthier Daulnay, covered with blood and dying, his dress torn, and the hilt of a sword in his hand, staggered into the room and fell at the Queen's feet.

"Gauthier!" cried Marguerite, falling on her knees beside him, and raising his head in her lap; "speak to me—I am your mother!"

But it was too late—there was a slight motion of the arm—a convulsive distortion of the features, and her child was lying dead before her.

The assassins had collected on the landing, astonished at the strange spectacle they were witnessing. Buridan was standing near the door, with his hands crossed on his breast, horror-stricken and confounded; and Marguerite had fainted on the body of her victim, when the

heavy and measured tramp of armed men sounded on the staircase. Immediately, Savoisy and his guards entered the room.

“Monseigneur,” said the crafty Orsini, stepping forward, “we have arrived too late to save this gentleman; but we can seize his murderers,” pointing to Marguerite and Buridan.

“You are my prisoners,” said Savoisy, advancing towards them.

“Prisoners!” exclaimed Buridan vacantly, “I am prime minister, and this is the Queen—you can arrest neither of us.”

Savoisy removed his hat, and addressed them with stern respect: “My business here, Monsieur, is neither with the Queen, nor with her minister. The body of Gauthier Daulnay is still bleeding at my feet; his murderers are before me, and I have the order, signed by the King’s own hand, to arrest all, whatever may be their rank or station, that I may find this night in the Tour de Nesle; although one of those prisoners is Marguerite de Bourgogne.”

APPENDIX.

As an appendix to the tradition of Marguerite de Bourgogne, the following historical particulars, connected with the chief scene of the incidents, may not be without interest to the reader.

The Tower of Nesle was, as we have described it, a lofty circular building, formerly occupying the site of the pavement between the Pont des Arts and the Institute. It was exactly opposite the Louvre, and corresponded to a similar tower on the other bank of the river, called *La Tour qui fait le coin*.

The vivacious Brantôme tells us an anecdote of a certain Queen of France, whose name he does not mention, and who was accustomed to inhabit the tower occasionally—"Laquelle faisant le guet aux passants et ceux qui lui revenaient et agréaient le plus de quelque sorte de gens que ce fussent, les faisait appeler et venir à soy, et, après avoir tiré ce qu'elle en voulait, les faisait précipiter du haut de la Tour en bas,

en l'eau, et les fesait noyer." He afterwards adds, "Je ne veux pas assurer que cela soit vrai, mais le vulgaire, au moins la plûpart de Paris, l'affirme."*

The poet, Jean Second, in some verses he wrote upon the Hôtel de Nesle, refers to Brantôme's story as true. Villon, who wrote in the fifteenth century, at an epoch less distant from the events, informs us, that the victims of these gallantries were enclosed in a sack, and then cast into the Seine. One of them, Jean Buridan, (who subsequently gained a name in the universities of Paris, by publishing a thesis, which we will speak of presently,) had the good fortune to escape; and on this subject Villon wrote as follows :

"Semblablement où est la Reine
Qui commanda que Buridan
Fût jeté en un sac en Seine."

This Queen, of whom Brantôme, Jean Second, and Villon make equal mention, passed successively for Jeanne de Navarre, wife of Philippe-le-Bel; then for Marguerite de Bourgogne, first wife of Louis X.; and, also, for

* Femmes Galantes. Discours 2. Art. 1.

Blanche and Jeanne de Bourgogne, all three the daughters-in-law of Philippe-le-Bel.

Robert Gaguin, a writer of the fifteenth century, takes upon himself to defend the reputation of Jeanne de Navarre, from the circumstance that she was not living at the same period as Buridan, although he speaks of his (Buridan's) adventures as true; and states his escape to have suggested the thesis written by that person, which bore the title: *Ne craignez pas de tuer une Reine : cela est quelquefois bon.*

As for Marguerite de Bourgogne, and her sisters, Jeanne and Blanche, there is little doubt concerning their fate. Arrested and convicted of their lawless gallantries, they were imprisoned at Château-Gaillard, and Marguerite was there strangled in 1315. Jeanne was detained a prisoner at the Château-de-Dourdan for some time. She was subsequently liberated, with her sister Blanche, and became the wife of Philippe V., called "the Tall." She founded the College de Bourgogne from the proceeds of the sale of the Hôtel de Nesle.*

* Histoire des Reines et Régentes, par Dreux de Radier.



THE ARMOURER OF PARIS.

A ROMANCE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

The following story has been adapted, in the same manner as the preceding one, from M. Lochroy's drama of *Perinet Leclerc*.

THE ARMOURER OF PARIS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW PERINET MET QUEEN ISABELLE'S LOVER AT VINCENNES.

THROUGHOUT the historical annals of the middle ages of France, there is not a period more fraught with dreary images of oppression, uncertainty, and distress, than the reign of the unfortunate monarch, Charles VI. Beloved by his people, in the first instance, to a degree that caused the appellation *Le Bien Aimé* to be added to his name, his mental aberration was felt as doubly severe by his subjects, inasmuch as the power assumed by others during his insanity was harsh, selfish, and oppressive; and the contending factions by which the country was divided, stirred up perpetual feuds in the bosoms of her highest families.

Although the Salic law precluded the absolute government of a woman, yet the proud determined spirit of Isabelle de Bavière, in many instances, carried all before her; and on the other side, the arrogance of those who held the passive and unconscious monarch in their toils, was at times equally adequate to the performance of the fullest prerogatives of sovereignty. Nor did this civil dissension spread its influence over the aristocracy alone. The *bourgeoisie* of France, and more especially of Paris, whilst each advocated the cause of D'Armagnac or of Bourgogne, introduced the spirit of discord to their own hearths, oftentimes causing the most bitter enmities between those who were bound together the closest by every tie of consanguinity and affection. The vintage remained uncared for, the land assumed a barren and deserted aspect, the whole face of the country appeared to be suffering under the curse of an interdict; and the people, already impoverished by the demands wrung from them for the luckless contest of Azincour, and ground down by new imposts, daily murmured in secret, as they awaited only a fitting occasion to break out into open revolt.

Things stood thus, when, one spring morning, whilst the deep obscurity that reigns over the hour or two immediately preceding the break of day, still flung its dark veil around the towers and ramparts of the castle of Vincennes, a solitary individual cautiously proceeded in the direction of that edifice, along the straggling road which conducted to the city of Paris, distant some three or four miles. Although mantled in a large cloak, which partially concealed his form and costume, he had the bearing of a high-born and courtly cavalier. And when the dancing gleam of the lantern which he displayed from time to time, although but for a second or two, when any obstacle arose to his progress, reflected its bright ray from some white and aged pollard, upon his countenance, it might have been observed that his face was rich in manly bearing and intellectual expression; and the occasional displacement of his mantle, as it caught on the protruding branches of the trees that bordered his route, discovered that his garments were of fine and costly texture. Stealthily and silently as he proceeded, there appeared little to disturb his progress, for all around

him was still as death. At times the distant bay of a hound, aroused by some nocturnal intruder, broke the silence ; or the more approximating challenge of the men-at-arms upon the ramparts, echoed through the woody park that surrounded the castle. Yet did the cavalier proceed with the greatest caution. Not a leaf fell rustling through the underwood in its course towards the ground—not a scared owl flew whooping from its covert,—but he grasped the handle of his sword, and hurriedly turned his light in the direction whence the sounds proceeded.

As he approached the château, whose lofty and irregular turrets now rose in indistinct gloom before him, he became aware, for the first time, that some one was following. A light in one of the upper apartments of the castle threw a faint gleam over the greensward, in front of the low wall which encircled the fosse, by which he perceived the outline of a figure closely mantled as himself, moving with apparently the same caution towards the spot where he stood.

To extinguish the lamp he carried was the work of a moment ; and then, drawing his

sword, he rested against the wall, and watched the movements of the other party. But the new comer did not seem inclined to act on the offensive. On the contrary, he drew back a few steps; and finding his progress impeded by a huge oak, calmly folded his arms, and leaning against it, appeared to await the other's pleasure to commence a parley. The cavalier was evidently at a loss as to what course he should pursue. He moved onwards, still keeping close to the wall of the fosse, and his unknown follower immediately left the tree, and occupied the spot which the other had just deserted. Again they watched each other for a short time in mistrustful silence, which the cavalier was the first to break.

"Hallo, my master!" he cried in a low voice, as if careful that its sound should not reach the castle. "Will you please to change your route, or will you take the precedence?"

"Wherefore either one or the other?" demanded the stranger bluntly.

"Because," returned the cavalier, as he contemptuously eyed the evidently inferior apparel of his companion, "Because my blood is not sufficiently ennobled to require that a

squire should wait upon me; and if I chose to be followed by a page, I would select one of more creditable appearance."

"By my faith, messire," answered the other composedly, "the provost would have a hard matter to choose between us. Nevertheless, I shall not change my road; because the one I am following leads to where I am going, and finishes at this spot. At the same time I do not wish to hinder *your* journey."

"Mine finishes here also," replied the cavalier. "Is it not enough to tell you at once that I do not want your company?"

"Nor I yours," was the dogged retort.

"When this tone is assumed towards me," exclaimed the first speaker, advancing towards the intruder, "it must be sustained at the sword's point! Guard yourself, my master!—the night is not so dark but I can see to use a sword."

As he approached, the new comer leapt suddenly towards him, and seized his arm. "Hold, for an instant, I beseech you," he exclaimed; "I have not come here to fight, nor have I the time to spare.—The Chevalier Bourdon!" he added in astonishment, as he recognised the features of his adversary.

“Ha !” cried the other, drawing his poniard with his left hand, “you know me then. Who art thou?”

“Leave your blade in its sheath, monseigneur,” was the reply, “or you will regret having used it. I am called Perinet Leclerc. My father is an *échevin* of our good city, and keeper of the keys of the Porte St. Germain.”

“You are the armourer, if I mistake not, of the Petit Pont?”

“The same, sir. I sold you that bright harness which you wore at the last tourney, when Madame Isabelle, our gracious queen, crowned you with her own fair hands.”

“And what seek you at the castle of Vincennes?” asked the young courtier. “Are you ignorant, Perinet, that at this time of the night no one has right of entry, whatever his rank may be? Are you ignorant that all the gates are closed and the drawbridges raised?”

“I am not more ignorant of all this than yourself, monseigneur,” answered the armourer; “and yet you are here also!”

“How then do you expect to obtain admission?”

“At the spot where you now stand, I can

descend into the fosse, which is dry. By means of the rough masonry opposite, I can scale the wall; and by the rampart above, where no sentinel is stationed, I can enter the castle. It appears to me that we have interrupted each other at the commencement of the same journey, *beau sire*."

"You have acted foolishly in thus placing yourself as a spy upon my actions," said Bourdon angrily. "Had I not been certain, Perinet, that you were honest and loyal, a stroke of my dagger would before this have laid you at my feet, as a spy of the constable D'Armagnac."

"A spy of D'Armagnac!" exclaimed Perinet hastily. "Ah, sir, you little know me, if you harbour such a thought, were it only for an instant. But you shall be undeceived. I will confess to you a project, of which my own father is unconscious. A spy of the constable! It is he that has separated me from my betrothed."

"What mean you?" asked the cavalier.

"You shall hear. Marie has been brought up by Madame Bourdichon, the wife of a pewterer; a good and honest bourgeois, who took

her when she was quite an infant; for she is poor, monseigneur, and has no relation in the world. The house which they inhabit is close to the dwelling of the constable,—the Hôtel St. Paul; so close, indeed, that the Count D'Armagnac must pass the shop either to go out from or return to his abode."

"They see a brilliant *cortège*, then, when he goes abroad," observed Bourdon.

"Alas! my lord; his splendid equipage has partly caused my trouble. Marie was never tired of gazing at it; and with girlish delight, whenever she heard the tramp of horses in the court, she always left her work, and flew to the door, joyous and delighted as a child. One day, the constable observed her by chance, and she immediately attracted his notice. I do not wonder at it, for few saw her who did not admire her. When I called that day at the usual hour, I found the old people sad and pensive. I learnt that in my absence, a man had been there in the name of the Count D'Armagnac, offering to place Marie in the service of a great lady, who could insure her an enviable fortune. Judge my agony when I learnt, that, frightened by his threats, or dazzled by his promised

grandeur, they had allowed Marie to depart with him."

"And you have not seen her since?"

"I will tell you, monseigneur. I passed a month—a long, long month—in seeking her vainly, without ascertaining what had become of her. One night, when I returned home, comfortless and broken-hearted, I found a neighbour at my house, one Madame Josselin, who had just returned from Vincennes, where she had been selling a great number of jewels to the queen. She gave me a ring—it was Marie's—one I had given her, which she always wore. I then knew where she was concealed, but I passed twenty days at the castle, without being able to meet her. Yesterday morning, by pure chance, I entered the chapel. The queen was engaged at her devotions, and you were kneeling at her side. A lady of her suite approached me, and whispered: 'To-morrow, an hour before day-break, in this place, we will fly together.' It was herself that spoke, my lord, and I am here to meet her."

"Give me your hand, *mon brave*," said Bourdon, drawing off his jewelled glove, and grasping the rough palm of the armourer in his own;

“if, like you, I was deeply in love, I would envy you, Perinet, for you can carry off her you adore; whilst I—but no matter,” he continued quickly. “*Allons*, we must descend.”

“I am ready,” said Perinet, divesting himself of his cloak, which, together with Bourdon’s, he flung over the fosse.

“When we have gained the rampart,” said the young courtier, “we must separate. If you turn to the right, you will find a short passage that will conduct you to the chapel. You must follow its course in deep silence—you must not even breathe aloud, or the guard will hear you. *Bon courage*, and God protect you.”

“And you, also, monseigneur,” rejoined his companion.

“Do you hear aught stirring?” asked Bourdon. “It is about the time that the guard makes the round of the castle.”

“All is quiet,” replied Perinet.

“So, then—now for the venture,” said the cavalier, as he crossed the low wall, and cautiously descended into the fosse. “Place your foot to the right; you will feel a projecting stone, which affords safe resting.”

“*Pardieu!*” exclaimed the armourer, as he

followed Bourdon's directions; it is not the first time that you have made this journey, mon-seigneur; you know the road too well."

"Perinet," cried the other, from the fosse, "on your life, let no word ever escape your lips touching our meeting of to-night;—I implore it."

"You need not fear me, sir," replied the other, as he reached the ground. "Ha!" he added hurriedly, "down! down upon your face! the patrol is approaching!"

CHAPTER II.

HOW BOURDON WAS ARRESTED BY D'ARMAGNAC.

THE alarm given by Perinet Leclerc, as he reached the bottom of the fosse with his companion, was not without foundation. An instant afterwards, the glare of the cressets carried by the patrol, was visible on the walls and ramparts of the castle, and even extended its illumination to the trees in the park around. As they came on, reflecting the red light at an hundred points from their bright armour, and throwing their huge shadows against the highest towers in flitting and confused outline, the two adventurers crouched down in silence against the lower supports of the drawbridge; and, somewhat concealed by its massy platform, which was raised high in air above them, awaited, with almost breathless anxiety, the passing of the guard.

“Now, Perinet,” muttered Bourdon, as the

sound and lights of the men-at-arms gradually died away, "follow me with caution; and should we alarm the sentinel in crossing the rampart, which Our Lady avert, turn quickly to your right—that angle of the tower will screen us."

As he spoke, he grasped a small piece of iron that projected from the wall a little above his head, and, placing the point of his foot upon a broken piece of masonry, commenced ascending the inner side of the ditch. Perinet followed him in silence, and by various holds and resting-places, with which Bourdon seemed well acquainted, they arrived at the summit in a few minutes. But they were not yet safe. The chevalier crossed the top of the wall, and stood on the ramparts; and Perinet was about to do the same, when a piece of the coping yielded beneath the spring of his foot, and fell heavily into the fosse below, with a noise that echoed through every corner of the building. Seizing the armourer by the collar, Bourdon dragged him, with a powerful effort, on to the rampart, and they both darted behind the projecting turret, as the challenge of a sentinel proved the disturbance

had not passed unnoticed; whilst the slow but gradual approach of daybreak rendered them almost visible to the guards who were posted at different commanding stations about the castle.

“*Qui vive?*” cried the chief of the *patrouille*, from the other end of the ramparts.

There was no answer.

“You cry out at every bush, sergeant,” said one of the guard.

“I am not yet quite so blind, Olivier,” returned the other, “as to be unable to distinguish a man at fifty paces, whether it be in the dark or not. I repeat I saw something move upon the rampart.”

“Bah!” retorted the soldier addressed as Olivier, “and so did I. A cat, sergeant, a cat — nothing else. Who in the devil’s name would try to get this way into the château, when they might walk through the gates in another half hour?”

The sergeant returned no answer, but bent his glance in earnest attention towards the wood opposite, whose trees were becoming visible in the grey twilight of morning.

“I am not deceived this time, however,”

he exclaimed. "Holla ! *mes braves*, attention. It is barely clear enough to distinguish plainly, but I fancy I can descry a troop of horsemen advancing along the Paris avenue. Is it not so, Olivier ?"

"There are two who keep some little distance before the others," replied the soldier, gazing keenly in the direction indicated. "And see, they are quitting their saddles !"

"They advance towards the château," said the sergeant.

"By my faith," exclaimed Olivier, "I should like to try whether I have strength enough to send a shaft against their doublets."

As he spoke he drew an arrow from his belt, and fitted its nick to the string of his bow.

"Hold your aim one instant," said the sergeant, arresting his arm. "*Qui vive ?*"

"The king !" shouted a powerful voice from amongst the party.

At these magical words, in answer to the challenge of the guard, a new movement on the part of the wardens of the château took place. In an instant, the trumpets had sounded a salute ; the chains of the drawbridge began to

creak, as they slowly swung their massive burthen upon the platform of the opposite side; and the guards hastened down the flight of steps which led from the ramparts to the chief gate, crossed the fosse, and advanced to meet the royal cortège that approached.

At the head of the party were two persons, who, as the archer described, had quitted their horses, and were walking a little in advance of the main body. One of them was about fifty years of age, and bore the traces of a benevolent and expressive countenance, but his carriage was abject and stooping; and his eye, wild and unsettled, regarded every object with suspicion and distrust, as he leaned for support upon the arm of his companion. His features, too, were pale, very pale, and his limbs small and attenuated; indeed he appeared to walk with painful difficulty. The other was about the same age, but far different in appearance. His iron features, and stern determined command of countenance, enabled him to carry his years with less symptoms of decline. His step was firm and resolute, and his general deportment that of one accustomed to command, and to have those commands obeyed. That they

were persons of consequence was evident from the respect with which the sergeant of the guard received them. As the men-at-arms approached to learn their orders, the first-mentioned of these two personages uttered a cry of terror, and, darting from his companion, covered his eyes with his hands, as he cried out, in accents of extreme fear:

“Save me ! my brother of Orleans, save me !
—it is the phantom !”

The other made a hurried sign to the sergeant, who immediately proceeded to withdraw his body of archers, equally astonished as his men at this singular exclamation.

“You would have drawn your bow at a famous aim, Olivier,” whispered one of the soldiers to his fellow, as they receded.

“Our lord the king would probably have been grateful for it,” was the retort. “Save the mark—he is entirely mad, or the Comte D’Armagnac would never bring him to Vincennes at this time in the morning.”

The constable of France, whom the soldier mentioned by name, approached the personage he had just now supported, and who remained in the same terror-stricken position.

“Monseigneur,” he said, in a low soothing tone, “compose yourself, there is no phantom here.”

“Ah ! D’Armagnac,” returned the king, for it was the unhappy Charles who spoke ; “you did not see him then ? But he is gone now—quite gone.”

The king tottered as he spoke ; and the constable, seeing that he was about to fall, conducted him towards an aged tree, on whose mossy trunk he caused him to be seated. The hapless Charles gave him a look of mute thanks ; and then pressing his hands against his temples, swayed his body backwards and forwards in unmeaning restlessness.

“You are suffering, monseigneur,” said the constable.

“Oh, yes,” replied Charles, without looking up, or removing his hands from his head. “It is here—all here. My brain burns, D’Armagnac. Let us wait a little—the moist air of the morning will refresh and cool it. It is a long, long time that I have thus suffered. When was I first ill ?” and he rubbed his hand vacantly across his forehead, as if to assist his recollection.

“You should drive away these sad remembrances, sire,” rejoined the constable.

“I cannot, D’Armagnac; I cannot,” returned the king. “Ah! now I recall to mind, it was in a forest—it was there that the phantom first appeared to me. I was on my way to wrest the assassin of Clisson from the Duc de Bretagne. Where is Louis d’Orleans? I would see him.”

“Do you not remember, monseigneur,” said the constable, “that it is now ten years since your beloved brother was murdered in the Rue Barbette, by the same Duc Jean de Bourgogne, who is at this moment advancing in arms against his king?”

“Charles slowly raised his head, and fixed his eyes upon the constable, as he answered unconnectedly,

“You have—you have said that the English have landed upon our shores.”

“It is true, sire,” replied D’Armagnac.

“Where?”

“At Touques, in Normandy. Bourgogne has already taken possession of Abbeville, Amiens, Montdidier, and Beauvais.”

“Alas! alas!” exclaimed the king with

anguish. And what think you of doing, my cousin, to repulse these two enemies at once? I name *you*, for I am too feeble now to assist you."

"Sire," replied D'Armagnac, "I have already taken measures for the purpose, which you have approved of. You have also named the Dauphin Charles lieutenant-general of the kingdom."

"'Tis true," muttered the king. "But I told you also, constable, that he was too young; he is not yet fifteen. Why have you not rather given this office to his elder brother, Jean?"

"Sire!" exclaimed the comte, "is it possible that there are mental sufferings so great as to make a father forget the loss of his children? He is dead."

"Yes, yes," returned the king; "I remember—he died at our good town of Compiègne. Dead!" he continued, with mournful emphasis on the word; "Dead! It is the only echo that now replies when I call around me my children and relations. There is, then, only Charles to divide the command of the troops with you?"

“No other, sire, and if we had the money to raise new ones——”

“Have we not the funds reserved for the wants of the state?” interrupted the king.

“They have been consumed, sire,” returned the comte.

“And by whom?” demanded the king eagerly. “Who has dared to appropriate them? It is either my wife or my son who have committed this theft—for theft it is—against the state. Alas! they look upon me as already dead.”

“Sire,” replied the wily D’Armagnac, “the Dauphin Charles is too respectful not to obey, whatever they may be, the orders of his father.”

“Then you would say it is the queen!” exclaimed the monarch. “Well, we are about to see her; we will order her to restore it at once.”

“It has been already dispersed, monseigneur,” coldly returned the constable, “in the purchase of jewels and furniture for her boudoir.”

“What then must be done?”

“We cannot tax the people again,” replied

D'Armagnac ; "they murmur even now at the imposts. Sire," he proceeded with energy, "you are too lenient with the queen. She is ruining the kingdom, and before God it is yourself that will answer for it. Has the public misery tended to diminish her extravagance? Far from it: on the contrary, it increases with the general distress. Her careless profusion causes even the wealthy families to grow discontented."

It was indeed a reckless and gallant court that Isabelle de Bavière kept at Vincennes, although without the castle walls, all was gloom and distress. No expense was spared, no luxury omitted, to attach those who composed it to their mistress. According to the chronicler, "*les Seigneurs y étoient fort assidus, et les Dames fort libres ;*" and as there appears to have been little secrecy observed in their gallantries, it was no wonder that the entire establishment passed, in the opinions of the country at large, as one not the best regulated in the world. And many handsome cavaliers preferred the attractions of high-born beauty and voluptuous indolence at Vincennes, to the political turmoil and varying contentions at Paris.

"It is too true, my cousin," said the king, in reply to D'Armagnac's forcible appeal; "we must try and turn her to our side, by according a favour she has long sued for. I have promised to appoint the Chevalier du Bois-Bourdon as governor of the château of Vincennes:—you may draw up his nomination for my signature."

"Have you really promised this, sire?" demanded the constable, as he cast his eyes towards the road leading from one of the side posterns of the castle, in the direction of Paris.

"I have, D'Armagnac," replied the king; "and I desire you to let this young man know the honour we have accorded him."

"It is probable he knows it already, sire," said the constable.

"Who has told him?" demanded the king quickly.

"She who demanded his nomination with so much energy."

"The queen!"

"The same, sire. She has so much confidence in the bravery of this young cavalier, that she has not even the patience to wait for his commission as captain of Vincennes."

“How mean you?” asked Charles.

“Cast your eyes in the direction of that road,” said D’Armagnac, indicating the route with his finger. — “Whom see you, monseigneur, now leaving the castle, and approaching us?”

“’Tis the Chevalier de Bourdon’!” cried the king. “How has he been able to enter the castle thus early? The gates are not yet open. What say they of him at my court, constable?”

“That he is in great favour with the ladies,” returned D’Armagnac; and that not one has resisted his suit.”

“Not *one*, Comte?” exclaimed the king.

“*None*, sire,” replied the constable, with a voice full of emphasis and meaning.

As they were yet speaking, the object of their conversation came lightly up the avenue towards them, carelessly humming the burthen of a Languedocian romance. On perceiving the king, he slightly raised his hat; and then, without noticing the constable, or any others of his suite, re-covered his head, and continued his road in the direction of Paris.

“Constable!” cried the king, starting up, “Let that young man be arrested. He carries the colours of the queen, too, in his hood!”

“Provost of Paris!” exclaimed D’Armagnac to that functionary, who remained at the head of the guard in the back-ground, “the king wishes the Chevalier du Bois-Bourdon to be arrested. Follow and secure him.”

The provost selected two men from the ranks, and hastened after the courtier, whilst the king sank back upon the mossy boll of the tree which formed his couch, in a fresh access of grief.

“Has she dared to push her audacity and insults thus far,” he cried, “as to crush me in this manner? She has learnt to laugh at me—to jeer at my helpless condition, and she has taught others to do the same. Isabelle! Isabelle! I have not deserved this from you!” and covering his face with his hands, he burst into a flood of tears.

“They have seized him, sire,” said the constable, laying his hand on Charles’s shoulder, and recalling him to the proceedings of the instant.

"We have no more business here, then," returned the king. "Come, my cousin, let us go back to Paris. You have led me here thus early, and it has been for a bitter purpose."

"And your orders, monseigneur?" asked D'Armagnac, as he summoned their horses, and prepared to return.

"The queen shall go to Tours, if she be culpable," answered the monarch. "We will try how she can fare without retinue or liberty."

"And the Chevalier du Bois-Bourdon?"

"To the torture, in the dungeons of the Grand Châtelet. *Allons*, my cousin, we will return."

The constable despatched a gentleman of the king's guard to the château with the royal mandate; and then, placing himself, with the unfortunate monarch, at the head of the escort, slowly and thoughtfully bent his horse's steps in the direction of Paris.

CHAPTER III.

HOW PERINET STARTED ON THE QUEEN'S MISSION.

AT the lower part of the turret, behind whose projection Bourdon and Perinet had concealed themselves upon alarming the guard, was a small door which conducted to the bottom of a flight of winding steps, and thence into the interior of the château. Pushing it gently, the door yielded, and the chevalier, accompanied by the young citizen, ascended the stairs with noiseless speed; resting only a few steps on their way, at one of the narrow loopholes in the wall, to perceive that the falling masonry had, in reality, attracted the patrol towards the spot they had just quitted. As they reached the top, Bourdon gave a few hurried directions to the armourer respecting the passages he was to follow; then, wishing him good cheer, threw aside a piece of tapestry that covered the wall, and disap-

peared through a small panel which it concealed.

Left to himself, Perinet cautiously passed along a short corridor, in the main wall of the building; and next descended a few steps, crossed a small passage running at right angles to the corridor, and entered the chapel of Vincennes. It was a beautiful gothic edifice, which had been erected during the reign of the preceding monarch; and Perinet felt somewhat relieved when he found himself in a part of the château with whose locality he was not altogether unacquainted. The stained glass in the windows, nearly obscured what little light there was at present; but two small lamps suspended over the altar, threw a glimmer around, and enabled him to direct his steps towards the farther extremity. As he crossed the main body of the chapel, treading as lightly as he could, lest the echoes of his footsteps should be heard by those in the vicinity, the low sound of voices fell upon his ear. They approached, and he had scarcely time to shrink into the angle that the last pillar made with the wall, when two figures crossed the aisle. One of these he immediately recognised as the che-

valier Bourdon, and the other—he scarcely dared to presume that it was the queen; and yet as they approached closely to where he was in ambush, he recognised the fine expressive features and noble figure of Isabelle de Bavière. One arm of the young courtier encircled her waist, and his other hand clasped her own. Her fine dark eyes were bent towards the ground, nearly concealed by their long lashes; and her attitude was that of deep attention to his conversation, although the low tone in which he spoke prevented anything more than a few detached words from reaching the armourer. They passed slowly onwards, and finally quitted the chapel by the chief entrance.

Wonder and amazement for a few minutes drove every other thought from Perinet's mind. But as the increasing daylight stole gradually over the grey columns and chequered pavement of the chapel, he again turned his attention to his appointment, and a fresh anxiety arose, as he recollected that the matins would commence ere long, and he must inevitably be discovered. But where was he to seek refuge? Marie had not kept her word, and he could not return by

the way he had arrived, for that would expose him to certain detection. He called to mind that Bourdon and the queen had come from the extreme end of the chapel, and that he might find means of egress in that direction. Crossing over towards the altar, he discovered at its side a small secret door which was half opened. He passed through it, and closing it after him, found himself alone in the queen's oratory.

It was a small chamber, situated at the extremity of the chapel, and having only two doors, one of which communicated with Isabelle's own suite of apartments, and thence with the rooms of the château; the other being the panel by which he had entered. A window guarded with gilt iron bars, afforded a view of the ramparts and distant country below on the Paris side; and Perinet imagined it must have been the light from this point, which he had seen before he crossed the fosse. A valuable *priedieu*, and other religious articles, were ranged against the walls, and the furniture was of costly and luxurious fashion.

As Perinet regarded these objects with curious admiration, he was startled by the bell of the chapel sounding for early mass. In a few

minutes after, the secret door opened, and the queen hurriedly entered. She cast a rapid glance behind her as she closed the panel, and without seeing the armourer, went directly to the window and gazed from it, with earnest attention, upon the courts below. It was a trying moment of suspense for Perinet. Aware that all escape was cut off, he resolved to make himself known, and trust to the queen's mercy for protection. Advancing towards the window, he threw himself at her feet, exclaiming: "Pardon, pardon, my gracious lady, that I am here!"

The queen shrieked as she perceived the armourer kneeling before her, and ran towards the panel, as if to leave the oratory. In a moment, however, she returned, ejaculating in almost breathless accents: "A man in my oratory! how came you hither? Answer, I command you."

"Chance has directed me, madame," returned Perinet, rising; "a hazard which I curse, since it has drawn your anger upon me."

"It was *chance*, I presume, led you to Vincennes?" said the queen, with a bitter sneer.

"I came, madame," replied Perinet, "to seek

my affianced bride, and awaited but the opening of the gates to bear her away."

"Her name?" demanded Isabelle sternly.

"Marie," faltered Perinet.

"It is false!" exclaimed Isabelle; "Marie would not quit me."

"I call our Lady to witness that I speak the truth, madame," was the reply.

"I can soon know, monsieur," said the queen, proceeding to the door of her apartment. "Marie!—I require your services."

At the summons, a fair girl of eighteen, in the costume of the queen's female attendants, entered the oratory from Isabelle's chamber. No sooner did she perceive the armourer, than uttering a cry of astonishment, she rushed towards him, and threw herself into his arms.

"You know that man, then?" asked the queen. "Answer—his life depends on your word."

"Oh! madame," replied Marie, turning to the queen, "it is my betrothed—it is Perinet Leclerc, with whom I was about to fly from Vincennes this night. I could not meet him, for you ordered me to remain up all night in my chamber, saying that you might need my

services. Pardon him, my queen, I implore you," she continued, falling on her knees, "or let me bear your anger."

"You wish to leave me, Marie?" said Isabelle. "What have I done to cause this?"

"It has been your kindness, madame, that prompted the action," replied Marie.

"How so, girl?"

"Because, madame," continued her fair attendant, "you know not why the constable has placed me here—you know not the mean office I was destined to fill after he took me from my home. A spy upon all your actions, I was expected to convey to him every sentiment that escaped your lips; but I swear to you, madame, he has drawn nothing from me. Watched by his people, it is two months that I have thus lived about you; and fearful of avowing the truth lest I should lose your confidence. You now know why I was anxious to leave you—at the risk of incurring your displeasure; but, at least, with the certainty of not having deserved it."

"Rise, *enfant*," said the queen, assisting her; "rise. You might have betrayed me—you did not, and I thank you. Now, Marie, I implore

you to remain, as a service to myself; for another may succeed you who will not have your candour."

The poor girl looked with uncertainty towards Perinet, and returned no answer.

"You are fearful of quitting your sweetheart, Marie?" said the queen. "Well, I will take charge of him also. Perinet, will you consent to be squire to the Chevalier du Bois-Bourdon, as soon as he shall have the command of Vincennes? Will you be faithful to me also if I procure you this place?"

"Even to death, madame," responded the armourer fervently, as he raised a small iron cross to his lips.

"Tis well," returned the queen. "You may look upon this favour as already granted. Marie!—retire, child, an instant: I would confer with your betrothed."

Her attendant withdrew to the window, and the queen proceeded in a low tone: "Perinet, remember—you have seen and heard *nothing* in the castle this morning; I keep by me a hostage of your fidelity. You now owe everything to me, and from this day you are in my service, body and soul."

"May Heaven punish me if I forget my duties!" returned the armourer.

"Madame!" cried Marie, from the recess of the window, "here are the king's guards in the court disarming our people. They arrest the Sieurs de Graville and de Giac!"

"What mean you, child?" exclaimed Isabelle, hurrying to the window.

"Look, madame," continued Marie; "Monsieur Dupuy, the evil spirit of the constable, crosses the court towards us—he ascends the staircase!"

"What can this mean?" muttered the queen, her countenance becoming deadly pale. "Perrinet," she continued, "I demanded of you this instant a devotion to me without bounds, and already I am about to put it to the test."

"You may dispose of my life, madame, if it pleases you," returned the armourer. "It is yours—I have said it."

"Enter this closet," said the queen, leading him to the door. "If they see you here, you are lost; and you can yet serve me. Quick! quick! they are at hand!"

The armourer had scarcely concealed himself, when Dupuy entered the oratory from the

state-apartments. He left the guards that accompanied him at the entrance of the chamber; and, advancing towards Isabelle, exclaimed:

“Madame the queen, I arrest you by the king’s command!”

“Me!” ejaculated Isabelle; “it is impossible, or Charles has, indeed, lost all reason.”

“And yet, madame,” returned the other, “ten years ago, when the Duc d’Orleans dwelt here with you——”

“You have to arrest me,” interrupted the queen hastily, “and your duty ends there. Moreover, monsieur, remember it is the custom to uncover your head before the queen.”

“The Chevalier de Bourdon omitted to do so before the king,” replied Dupuy, coldly removing his hat.

“When did this occur?” asked Isabelle.

“This morning, madame, at the gates of the château.”

“The king is here, then!”

“He has left for Paris.”

“And —— and Bourdon?” hesitated the queen.

“He is gone under good escort to the Châtelet,” replied Dupuy.

“But they dare not touch him for an offence like that,” said Isabelle hurriedly.

“I should not be here, madame, if he had only committed this one crime,” said Dupuy calmly.

“Enough, sir,” cried the queen. “Whither are you ordered to conduct me?”

“To the château at Tours, madame. The order of the king runs that you depart immediately, with one of your women.”

“You may leave the room, monsieur,” returned Isabelle. “I shall be ready to follow you in a few minutes.”

“Remember, madame, that you must depart without delay,” said Dupuy.

“Remember, sir, that I am your queen, and that I have ordered you to quit this oratory,” retorted Isabelle, gazing at him with flushed cheek and angry eye.

Dupuy slowly withdrew, murmuring a few unintelligible words as he departed. No sooner had he left the chamber, than Marie closed the door, and then quickly proceeded to liberate Perinet from the closet. The queen could disguise her emotions no longer, but sinking down on a fauteuil, covered her face with her handkerchief, and burst into tears.

“You are a prisoner, then, madame?” asked Perinet, after a few minutes’ agitating pause.

“Oh, it is not myself I care for,” returned Isabelle, “it is the Chevalier Bourdon that we must preserve.”

“Can we save him, madame?” said Perinet. “I have many devoted friends who would risk their lives for me, as twenty times I have risked mine for them. We will attack the Châtelet.

“And think you to save him by those means!” exclaimed the queen. “After you have shattered twelve doors of iron, and, arrived at his dungeon, find nothing but a senseless corpse, you will have saved him! It would but hasten his death. Perinet, on your life, do not attempt that plan.”

“Can you recommend aught else?” asked the armourer.

“I have gold,” returned Isabelle. “I am rich—I am the queen. Go to his prison, and say to those who guard it, ‘Kill him not; here is gold—gold enough to render you all wealthy—to purchase a kingdom if you wished it, but kill him not. And if this is not sufficient, she has, besides plate and jewels—the very pearls

of her crown!—Take all; she will give you all; she will even owe you still,—but kill him not.’ Alas!” she continued, wringing her hands, “if I could see those dreadful men for one instant, I could obtain all I want.”

“I will obey you, madame,” returned Perinet, touched at her keen distress.

“Oh, I am mad,” cried the queen rapidly, “mad to think that I could buy his life. No—they would not take my blood in exchange for Bourdon’s. Fool that I have been, when on the approach of the king’s delirium I might have demanded anything from him; even the head of D’Armagnac! What can be done?”

“My dear mistress!” exclaimed Marie, weeping, “Take comfort, we implore you. Even I must be separated from Perinet.”

“His absence will not be for ever, Marie,” replied the queen. “You will see him again. But for me!—I loved Bourdon as you love Perinet, and they are about to kill him! Do you hear, Marie?—to *kill* him, without my being able to do aught to save his life! Even now he may be struggling beneath the horrors of the torture, and I am not there to breathe a word of hope or courage in his ear! I am not

there to kiss his pale lips, or wipe the clammy dews of agony from his noble forehead !”

“ It is, indeed, most terrible !” ejaculated Marie.

“ And never to know his fate !” continued the queen, in the same tone. “ Never !—It is a word that falls sad and chill upon the heart of one that loves. But you are free, Perinet. You have heard they have taken him to the Grand Châtelet, and there must be your station also. You must not quit it for an instant ; and if he leaves it, dead or alive, you must come and tell me ;—do you hear ?”

“ You may depend on me, madame,” replied the armourer.

“ They have closed the gates of the château,” said the queen, rising and going to the window. “ You can escape by this gallery ; it opens on the fosse, where you can descend ; and when you are out of all danger, on the road to Paris, wave your scarf. I shall not depart from this window until I see it.”

“ Have you any other commands, madame ?” asked Perinet.

“ None — yet, stay,” returned the queen ; “ whatever may happen, you must let me know.

If you cannot come near me, you must send me your cross, if he is alive; and your poniard, if he is dead. Now go; and our Lady bless you!"

The armourer pressed his betrothed to his heart; and then, with a respectful salutation to the queen, quitted the apartment.

"All my hope is in his adventure, Marie," said Isabelle, as her messenger departed. "It is the sole chance they have left me. *O mon Dieu!* save and avenge me."

She knelt for a few seconds before the crucifix, and then rose to take her station at the window.

"How slow he is in passing along the gallery!" she exclaimed. What can have occurred to stop him? Ah! he is on the rampart, and approaches the fosse."

"Are there any sentinels on the turrets, madame?" asked Marie.

"One only;—he orders him to stop!"

"And what does Perinet?"

"He pursues his journey. Ha! the man-at-arms threatens to shoot him! He raises his arbalest; he discharges it!"

Marie uttered a faint cry as the audible jar of the crossbow reached the oratory.

“It is nothing, girl,” cried the queen; “he has not even turned his head. He is a brave young man, and God will protect him. He descends the rampart. I cannot see him more.”

Whilst she was yet speaking, Dupuy and his guards re-entered the oratory. Fortunately, however, they had heard nothing of the conversation, and were unacquainted with the cause of the queen’s anxiety.

“It is time to depart, madame,” said he, with stern emphasis.

“No, no, not yet,” hurriedly replied the queen. “I cannot leave yet; nay, I will not.”

“By will or by force, madame, you must come,” returned the officer.

“By force!” exclaimed Isabelle, as she twisted her white arm amongst the iron bars of the window. “Let me now see who will dare to lay a finger upon me!”

“You are no longer queen; you are my prisoner!” said Dupuy.

“Holy Virgin!” muttered Isabelle to Marie, “he appears not yet!”

“For the last time, madame, will you accompany me?” asked the commandant.

“Saved! saved!” cried the queen, unable

to suppress her joy, as she descried Perinet's scarf fluttering in the park. "He has escaped, Marie!"

"In the name of the king seize that female!" cried Dupuy to the guards.

Two or three of the men-at-arms advanced towards the casement. The queen left it; and waving them back with her hand, exclaimed, as she drew up her fine figure to its full height:

"*Arrière tous!* my place is at your head, messieurs."

The guards, and even Dupuy himself, fell back on each side with respect, as Isabelle and Marie passed through their ranks, and quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER IV.

OF MASTER BOURDICHON—OF HIS WIFE ; AND OF THE EMEUTE
RAISED BY THE SCHOLARS OF CLUNY.

THOSE who are acquainted with modern Paris would recognize in the present Place du Châtelet—in the elegant Fountain of the Palm-tree which adorns its centre—and in the Pont au Change which conducts to it from the Marché aux Fleurs, on the opposite side of the Seine, little of the appearance it presented at the commencement of the fifteenth century. The grim and frowning walls of the prison of the Grand Châtelet, so aged and time-worn that their very origin is lost in antiquity, then rose in sullen strength at the foot of the Pont aux Meuniers, a bridge lower down the stream, and, in consequence, nearer the Louvre than the other, no longer existing. Both these thoroughfares were, at that time, in common with the two others,

(for the Pont Neuf was not yet erected,) covered with unsightly and lumbering wooden houses. The open space in front of the dungeon branched off into the Rue de la Serpente, the Rue Savonnerie, which conducted to the Grève, by the Pont Nôtre Dame, in the line of the modern Quai Pelletier, and several other streets, only known to have existed by the mention of their names in the old chronicles.

On the day of the events described in the preceding chapter, the banks of the Seine, and the area before the Châtelet, presented a very bustling and animated appearance. Bateliers in the gayest coloured doublets of blue and red were busily arranging scaffoldings and standing places of tubs and planks, in every corner that afforded space for their contrivances. The Taverne du Porc Epic displayed a goodly and shining row of bright pewter vessels and dishes, and the servants were in their best attire, placing small tables and settles in front of the door, and in the balconies, or exhibiting the choicest viands in the most attractive forms, to invite customers: the houses had their windows adorned with va-

rious gaudy pieces of carpet and tapestry, some nailed to the sills, and others floating as banners, on which the arms of the constable were everywhere conspicuous: the city guards were occupied in superintending the erection of barriers at the ends of the different streets; and a large and mingled body of workmen, bourgeois, soldiers, students, and loiterers of every class and description, gave a stirring appearance to the various preparations.

But there was one person in the crowd so indefatigably active, that he appeared to be in every part of the jostling multitude at once, apparently doing nothing, but uttering endless orders and suggestions, to which nobody attended. He was a small pinched-up man, about five and forty years of age, with a most quaint oddity of countenance and general appearance, to which his attire in no small degree contributed. He wore the ordinary sad-coloured jerkin and grey hose of the middle classes of his city, but over these he had donned a bright corslet of the *garde bourgeoise*, evidently too large for him: as was the helmet which adorned, or rather disfigured, his comic-looking head. In his hand he carried

an immense halberd; and a sword, nearly as long as he was tall, dangled and trailed at his heels, perpetually throwing him down, to the great amusement of the spectators who chanced to be near him when such an accident occurred. At last, in his anxiety to assure himself that a standing had been properly fixed, he slipped, and rolled completely off it, coming down, all at once, upon the shoulders of a citizen, who chanced to pass at the moment—a grave and elderly man, whose dress bespoke him a *quartinier*, or magistrate of his quarter.

“May the pest seize you for a clumsy idiot!” was the salute that greeted him.

The little man scrambled on his hands and feet, and with great difficulty and much trepidation arose.

“I ask a million pardons, messire,” he gasped out. “Ah! Master Leclerc, is it you? I am glad it is no one else, or I might have fared worse; how is it you are not gone to walk in the procession?”

“I have just left it,” returned the other.

“And I am about to join it; for, as one of the citizen guard, it is part of my duty.”

“ Well; tarry an instant, man. Hola ! taverner, a flagon of your best wine. Come, Master Bourdichon, be seated.”

“ May St. Babolin, my patron, return your treat tenfold !” said the bourgeois, as he drew a stool towards him. “ Here’s your health, *compère*,” he continued, taking the flagon from the taverner, and filling a cup. “ Here’s your health, and that of your son, Perinet—a great fool who wishes to marry after seeing *my ménage* ! Dear ! dear ! Dame Bourdichon will be the death of me one of these fine days !”

“ Still always quarrelling ?” said his companion.

“ Forsooth ! what else can we do ?” was the reply. “ Ever since I allowed our little Marie to leave us, my wife has become a Bourguignian, out of hatred to the constable ; and since I am a follower of the other party, you perceive why we so often come to blows. I am ashamed to confess the Armagnacs had not the best of it just now. Fortunately, however, two or three of the scholars of Cluny came up, and restored the equilibrium between us.”

“ By my faith, Master Bourdichon,” said the taverner, who had listened with much en-

tainment to the confession, "I congratulate you on your deliverance from your wife's clutches."

"It is not often that happens," returned Bourdichon, removing his helmet with some trouble, and scratching his head; "but look you, Master Jacques; you must know that by way of rejoicing for the triumph of our cause—that is to say, in joy for the arrest of the queen, (who is gone this morning, as I hear, under good escort, to Tours,) I have sent you my white goose—oh! a glorious goose, that I have fattened for five years past, to eat on some fête-day."

"The day cannot be better chosen," observed the taverner.

"Well, out of love for D'Armagnac, and hatred for my wife, whom Beelzebub elope with as soon as he pleases! I mean to eat my goose to-day with some friends; and Master Leclerc will, I trust, join us?"

"I thank you, messire," replied the échevin; "but in these times of disorder I cannot quit the Porte St. Germaine, of which you know I have kept the keys for twenty years. And, by the way, I have already been absent

a long time. *Au revoir*, Master Bourdichon," he continued, as he rose to depart, "if you see aught of Perinet, send him to me."

His companion watched him as he retreated over the narrow thoroughfare of the Pont aux Meuniers, and then quietly emptied the remaining contents of the flagon into his own cup, preparatory to again putting on his helmet, and taking his place at the corner of one of the streets.

But during this conversation, the crowd had increased; and every practicable spot upon the line by which the cortége was expected to pass, had its occupant. The windows of the various houses, as far as the eyes could reach, were filled with spectators, even to the very coping; and a dense mass of living beings was wedged together behind each barrier, beguiling the time with endless squabbles, or amusing themselves with bandying jokes from one to the other at the expense of the sentinels who kept them within bounds. Along the irregular frontage of the wooden dwellings on the bridge, a similar assembly had collected; and the distant towers of the Palais de Justice were alike crowned with gazers, whilst the small streets in every

direction presented nothing but one uniform sea of heads, that swayed perpetually backwards and forwards. A small portion of the scholars had appropriated to themselves, without permission, the ledges over the different shops, where they perched themselves, swinging their legs about over the heads of the people below, and keeping up an incessant war of *argot* and impertinence with the crowd; but the majority were unwilling to leave the attractions of the wine-cup, and formed numerous groups round the different tables at the tavern, which being placed behind the barriers were comparatively out of the pressure of the multitude.

The patience of the assembly was becoming somewhat exhausted, (which was not unreasonable, considering the very uncomfortable positions they were mostly placed in,) when a banner was seen above the heads of the mob at the end of the Rue de la Serpente, and the sound of distant acclamations arose, in which the name of D'Armagnac was distinctly audible.

"The procession approaches!" cried a hundred voices at once.

"No, no, my masters," shouted the taverner,

who had climbed to the top of a high post that formed the standard of one of the barriers; "it is the constable on his way to meet it. Noël! Noël!"

The loudest acclamations arose as D'Armagnac entered the place, surrounded by his archers. So long as they made a noise, the mob cared not whom they cheered, and he was greeted on all sides with shouts of welcome.

"Messieurs!" he exclaimed, removing his hat, "keep your acclamations and welcomes for the king. I need not say how gratified I feel to see the people of his good city of Paris thus favourably disposed towards his friends. Let no fear of persecution mar the festivities of to-day, for the arrest of Isabelle de Bavière will not be a signal for persecution. The king has promised an amnesty to all partisans of the queen, who will return to their proper duty; and the functionaries of the city, whose *cortége* you await, will confirm it."

Fresh cries of triumph arose as D'Armagnac concluded. Then turning to the captain of his guard, he gave him some directions in an undertone, and entered the Châtelet.

It is not to be presumed that Master Bourdichon had remained silent during these lively demonstrations of welcome to the chief of his party. On the contrary, he had fixed a scarf to the top of his halberd, and was waving it, and cheering at the top of his strength, when an amazonian-looking female burst through the crowd, and instantly levelled the banner to the ground; a process which she followed up by bestowing divers sound cuffs on the neck of its owner, being the only unguarded part below his casque, to the infinite delight of the bystanders. "So!" she exclaimed at each blow; "so! you cry Noël to the constable, do you?"

"*Miséricorde!*" cried the luckless bourgeois; "it is my wife!"

Roars of laughter arose on all sides at this avowal.

"Oh, laugh—pray laugh, my masters!" said Bourdichon ruefully. "And may Satan give you a similar helpmate—that is to say, if he can form so perfect a *chef-d'œuvre* again!"

A few more cuffs and shakes from his wife were the reward of this speech.

"Mark her injustice!" cried the unfortu-

nate pewterer. "This is because I welcome the constable, at the moment he is announcing a pardon to all the queen's followers."

"Pardon!" screamed his infuriated partner. "Is it to pardon him, that they have brought a prisoner into the Grand Châtelet this morning?"

"Bah!" ejaculated the taverner, who, perched on the summit of the post, thought himself privileged to contradict Madame Bourdichon. "Who told you that lie?"

"Who told me?" continued the dame, fiercely turning towards the speaker. "Tassin Cail-lard, the dyer, saw them all pass."

"*Eh bien!*" retorted the taverner. "I'll wager that the constable has gone into the Châtelet expressly to pardon the prisoner."

"Do you call those angels of mercy?" cried Madame Bourdichon, pointing to the dungeon, at whose gate two closely muffled persons were waiting for admission.

"*Sainte Vierge!*" ejaculated Bourdichon; "the tormentor and the physician! And the door of the Châtelet opens of itself, as if it knew them."

"And shuts of itself," added his wife, "to

keep the shrieks and curses of the prisoner from reaching our ears. I shall go and learn the particulars, if I can get in."

"Enter the Châtelet!" cried another woman in amazement.

"And why not?" asked the shrew. "I know La Cochette, the gaoler's daughter, and she will tell me. If I find it is a Bourguignian they are torturing, my husband shall pay for it." Thus speaking, she turned towards the Châtelet, giving her spouse a contemptuous push, that sent him sprawling amongst the crowd, armour and all. Fresh shouts of laughter arose at his new discomfiture, and some of the students left their tables to ascertain the cause of the merriment.

"By all the saints!" cried one, "it is the luckless bourgeois we so valiantly rescued this morning from his wife's claws!"

"The same, messires," answered Bourdichon, scrambling up again upon his legs.

"He is still very agitated," continued the scholar, smiling. "Descend from your post, Master Taverner, and give us some wine to refresh him."

"And cards," cried another, as they re-

seated themselves. "I would know something about this new invention to please our mad monarch. What are they, Jehan?"

"Small pictures," returned the first speaker, "to which different value is attached by circumstances. Gringonneur, the painter, claims some credit for his ingenuity; let us drink his health."

"I can see the banners floating in the air," cried a scholar from one of the balconies above: "they are approaching."

"Then I must bid you farewell, my masters," said Bourdichon, rising, before he had tasted his first cup, "for I must join them. Keep your places, and you will see me pass."

The distant sound of the drums and trumpets foretold that the procession was at hand; and before long, the pikes of the advanced guard entered the place. The immense crowd again resumed their standings; Jacques, the taverner, climbed up the pole once more; and as the different grave personages arrived, who composed the cortége, he saluted them with respect, or indicated their names and offices to the multitude. In the middle of the excitement and confusion, Dame Bourdichon reappeared at the gate of the Châtelet.

“Room for messieurs the councillors of the Grand Chamber!” cried Jacques.

“Noël,” responded the people as the functionaries passed.

“Room for Dame Bourdichon, who seeks her husband,” continued the sly taverner.

Great merriment prevailed, as the portly dame elbowed her way through the crowd, and dragging a mechanic from the bench he occupied, coolly took possession of his place.

“Welcome to the procureur du Roi!” proceeded Jacques, as that individual was greeted with fresh acclamations.

“Ay, shout your throats dry,” cried Dame Bourdichon, “until you get them cut!—a time not far off.”

“What do you mean, mother?” asked Jehan the scholar.

“Mean!—that in the Châtelet, at the present moment, they are torturing a handsome young man. I heard his cries as they plugged his feet into iron boots with mallets and wedges!”

“Horror!” cried several of the by-standers. “Is it true? Do you know his name?”

“No,” continued the dame; “but I think I

could perceive through the chinks of the door that he wore a scholar's robe—that of Cluny.”

“A scholar of Cluny!” ejaculated Jehan, rising, “Tête-Dieu! attend here, you others.”

“Are you sure of this, madame?” inquired a woman, in an under tone.

“I am not, Dame Jacquemine,” she answered; “but if they hear it is one of their own party, they will get up a disturbance with the citizen guard, and beat my husband.—Look you, young men,” she continued to the scholars, in a loud voice, “the smoke issuing from yonder chimney of the Châtelet, arises from the fire where they redden the pincers and irons of torture; and all this is going on whilst these men in scarlet and black robes are on their way to congratulate the king.”

“You are right, dame,” cried Jehan, mounting on one of the tables. “Down with the cortége!” he shouted. “Down with the tyrants that would torture the scholars of Cluny!”

With the swiftness of lightning did the war-cry of the scholars run from one to another, and speedy was the effect produced. In an instant, the majority of them had assembled round their ringleader; and those over the

shops dropped down, unhesitatingly, on the heads of the crowd below, and fought their way to the front of the tavern, crushing in the barrier, and breaking down all before them.

“Flagons and goblets for the functionaries of Paris!” shouted Jehan, launching a massy cup at the procession.

“What are you about to do?” cried the taverner, fearful for his property, as he rapidly descended from his station. “Bourgeois! to my aid!”

“Artificers!” shouted Jehan, “assist the scholars. If they commence with the robes of the students, they will not be long in reaching the pourpoints of the mechanics—the torturer does not soon stop when he once begins. At the cortége! Seize the benches—the barriers—anything! *A bas! A bas le cortége!*”

A crowd of people, excited by the hurried address of the scholar, immediately surrounded him, and then the riot commenced. Grasping everything they could lay their hands upon, and at the same time partially sheltered by the barriers in front, they cast a shower of missiles at the functionaries and their attendants. In vain the taverner, supported by a few of the

citizens, threatened, swore, and implored them to desist by turns. It was of no use; and his bright cups and tankards, together with his chairs and tables, were flying in all directions.

“Bravo, *mes braves*,” cried Jehan; “down with them! down with the torturers! Close the chains of the Quai. We are safe here—they cannot hurt us if they would.”

“Messieurs,” cried the taverner, appearing at his first-floor window, “I entreat your forbearance.”

“Down with the taverner!” shouted Jehan, hurling a wooden platter at his head, with so delicate an aim that it caused him to descend immediately.

“*Vrai Dieu!* companions,” cried another scholar, “here is a reinforcement.”

“Where? where?” shouted fifty voices at once.

“On the Pont aux Meuniers,” answered the scholar, pointing to a man who was crossing it in haste. “It is Perinet Leclerc!”

A shout of exultation burst from the collegians, as the armourer, pale and breathless, rapidly descended the bridge, and joined their party.

“ Our Lady aids us ! ” exclaimed Jehan, “ for Perinet is ours, hand and heart.”

“ I have seldom refused to join you, my learned masters,” returned Perinet eagerly, “ but to-day I am not my own master. Neither my head nor my arm is at my own disposal.”

“ And yet we have strange need both of one and the other,” responded Jehan. “ You must aid us to save a brother from the torture in the Châtelet.”

“ A scholar ! ” muttered Perinet ; “ if it should be he ! But how can we accomplish it ? ” he added aloud.

“ By beating the bourgeois guard,” cried dame Bourdichon, never forgetful of her husband, from the interior of a neighbouring shop, whither the first tumult had driven her.

“ And by storming the Châtelet ! ” exclaimed the students.

“ You cannot do it, *mes enfans*,” said the Armourer “ Storm the Châtelet ! the old Châtelet, that is built of stone so hard, you might work at it all day without hollowing out a gap to hide the shortest of your daggers ! No, no, trust to my counsel — ”

“ We do not want counsel,” interrupted Jehan impatiently ; “ but an arm that can make

a breach in a wall, or the head of an archer : take care of your own, Perinet, if you are a coward."

"Right, Jehan, right!" cried the students, turned by every new impulse. "Away with the mechanic—down with the Armourer!"

"Stand back!" ejaculated Perinet, shaking off a couple who had seized his pourpoint; and drawing his sword, "here is my place," he continued, clinging with his left arm to the post that had formed the observatory of the taverner. "Here is my place, and I will not leave it until it be well stained with my own blood."

The students advanced *en masse* towards him, and the consequences of his boldness might have proved fatal, when the alarm was given that the archers were advancing along the Quai, and their arrival in the place directly afterwards, changed the fortune of the contest.

"Scholars, citizens and mechanics," cried the officer, "I order you in the name of the king, and the Comte d'Armagnac, to leave this place."

"Down with the constable!" exclaimed a woman's voice from a shop.

"Down with the archers!" responded the scholars, retreating behind their barricades.

The guard advanced, like a body of iron, against the rioters. The scholars, being unprovided with weapons, were unable to cope with the pikes and halberds of the soldiers, and after greeting them with a shower of projectiles, retreated in all directions, with the exception of Perinet, who had concealed himself behind the corner of one of the barricades, anxious not to quit the neighbourhood of the Châtelet; and the taverner, who was alternately lamenting and collecting the fragments of his property.

“Hola! master citizen,” cried the officer to a member of the guard, who was crossing the place towards the tavern. “We have need of your services as a sentinel on the Pont aux Meuniers.”

“I am engaged, sir archer,” was the reply.

“’Tis no business of mine,” returned the soldier. “Take your halberd and guard the foot of the bridge, until they come to relieve you, with the consign to disperse all loiterers.”

The citizen shouldered his weapon with an ill grace, and walked to the spot, muttering, “Confound the consign! Here am I hungry enough to eat all my goose myself, and have nothing to gnaw but an old halberd.”

Whereupon master Bourdichon, for it was

he, began to pace up and down the limits of his walk, in extreme anger.

An hour passed by in painful suspense on the part of Perinet, who still remained behind the barrier, fearful of attracting the notice of any of the archers who from time to time approached the Châtelet. On his way from Vincennes in the morning, he had engaged a boatman to await his signal below the parapet that bordered the river, and in the event of any news of Bourdon, to convey it to the queen. The person he had employed in this service was a tried friend, whom Perinet had served in like manner on many former occasions; and he became anxious lest suspicion should be roused by his loitering on the river so long, in the vicinity of the Châtelet, and thus destroy the only means he could rely upon, of sending his intelligence to Isabelle. Nor was master Bourdichon in the best of possible moods. The thoughts of his roast goose, which his friends might be even at that time devouring, kept him in a perpetual worry. "If I could only see them," thought he, "it would be some consolation." To effect this purpose, he placed his halberd on the ground, and, first carefully

looking round to make sure he was not observed, mounted the parapet of the Quai, and gazed with intense longing towards the tavern. This movement was not lost upon Perinet, and he determined to profit by it. He left his hiding-place, and advanced boldly towards the citizen.

“Who goes there?” cried Bourdichon, leaping hurriedly from the wall, and snatching up his halberd. “Halloo! is it you, Perinet? what do you want here?”

“I have come to relieve you,” returned the Armourer; “and as a proof, I will tell you the consign; it is to disperse all loiterers.”

“You are right,” returned Bourdichon, in eager haste. “Here, take my dagger and my halberd. Perinet, if my wife should come this way, remember the consign—do not let her loiter about in the neighbourhood.”

“I will recollect it,” answered Perinet, half smiling at the joy of the bourgeois to be released. “Now, you are at liberty, and God speed you.”

Before he had well finished speaking, Bourdichon was across the street, and immediately after hurried into the tavern, leaving the Armourer on duty, and alone.

CHAPTER V.

HOW BOURDON LEFT THE CHATELET; AND HOW PERINET
SENT HIS CROSS TO QUEEN ISABELLE, AND RECEIVED
ANOTHER IN ITS PLACE.

THE day wore on. The heavy chimes from the Tour d'Horloge marked the approach of evening, which the gathering shadows around the high close buildings of the Pont aux Meuniers confirmed, and still Perinet kept his watchful guard upon the Quai. Few people were abroad, for the uproar of the morning had driven the more timid of the inhabitants within their doors; and the guards, who had been posted at all the places of public resort, prevented the assembling of any loiterers within range of their arbalests. One or two stragglers who dwelt upon the bridge had recognised Perinet, but without any particular feeling of suspicion that he was acting for another; on the contrary, they believed him to have been ordered to the station, from the first, being himself a citizen.

By degrees, all was quiet, and lights ap-

peared one by one in the windows of the different houses, together with a few dim and straggling lamps which started out gradually from the obscurity of the Quai. As the curfew from the distant bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois—that fatal bell which nearly two centuries afterwards rang out the knell of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Eve—noted the progress of the evening, the suspense of Perinet became most acute. Every time he approached the parapet of the river wall in his walk, he cast an anxious glance at the swift current below, in the hope of discovering some trace of his messenger: and each time was he disappointed. At length, worn out in mind and spirits, he was about to quit his post, heedless of discovery, and return home, when he heard his name pronounced in a low tone, and directly afterwards a man's head appeared above the parapet.

“Gervais—my faithful Gervais! is it you?” cried Perinet, casting his halberd to the ground, and rushing towards him. “What has thus delayed your approach?”

“I could not come before dusk,” replied the boatman, “there have been sentinels posted along the whole river bank.”

“And your boat?”

“Is below, at the nearest pier of the bridge.”

“’Tis well,” observed Perinet, as he distinguished the small craft tossing about in the eddy of the arch. “Descend into it, and remain immediately below where I now stand until I throw you down the cross—if it be the cross I am to send, which our Lady grant!”

“And when I have got it?” inquired Gervais.

“Take your oars,” replied Perinet emphatically, “and, whatever betide, stop not on your course until you are clear of the city. This achieved, seek the Queen Isabelle, wherever she may be—whether at Tours or Vincennes you must gain an interview with her; be she in a dungeon or a palace, say to her, ‘Perinet sent me,’ and your mission will be accomplished.”

“It shall be done,” exclaimed Gervais, as he prepared to descend the Quai.

“Take also this purse,” rejoined Perinet; “it will shorten your journey, and the queen is impatient. Be careful,” he continued as he mounted the parapet to watch the boatman’s descent. “Draw your boat to the last ring

in the wall below, and sit there with your knife in readiness to cut the rope."

But whilst this short dialogue was taking place, the doors of the Châtelet were opened, and D'Armagnac, who had been within its walls since noon, appeared, followed by a few of his archers. An ill-disguised smile of triumph played over his sinister features, as he folded up a parchment which he held in his hand, and deposited it beneath his cuirass. Then, pausing an instant, to allow time for his guards, who were bearing torches, to precede him, the whole party moved towards the Pont aux Meuniers. The armourer had been so occupied with his instructions to Gervais, that he had not perceived the constable's approach; and having seen everything in readiness, turned round to regain his post, when he came full face to D'Armagnac, who was about to cross the bridge. At the same moment the door of the tavern opened, and Jacques, Bourdichon, and a few citizens, anxious to avail themselves of the protection of the constable's guard on their way home, came out with torches, casting a bright light on the Quai, and area in front of the Châtelet.

“What do you here?” cried D’Armagnac, as Perinet nearly leaped upon him from the wall.

“I am the sentinel,” returned the armourer, confused and startled at the sudden appearance of the other party.

“And your halberd?”

Perinet returned no answer; he had left the weapon on the ground in his anxiety to see Gervais, and a captain of the guard now produced it. The armourer folded his arms and regarded the constable in anxious silence, as the revellers from the *Porc Epic* thronged round him in amazement.

“So, messieurs,” exclaimed D’Armagnac sternly; “you are trusted with the safety of the city, and ’tis thus you fulfil your duty! Let one of you take this young man’s place.”

“Take this halberd, sir,” said the captain, giving the weapon to Bourdichon, who chanced to be the nearest, and received it with the worst grace in the world, mumbling that he was fated to guard the bridge that night. “The others,” continued the officer, “may depart.”

“No,” ejaculated D’Armagnac; “let them remain. I am about to teach them a lesson, which will render them more vigilant in future.”

The citizens stared, and looked towards each other with inquiring glances, but Perinet still maintained the same calm position. "If they kill me," thought he, "how will Isabelle know the fate of Bourdon?" and in this doubt were all his anxieties comprised.

"Henri and Philippe," cried D'Armagnac to two of his archers, "draw your swords!"

There was a movement of terror on the part of the by-standers, but not a muscle of Perinet's face stirred:

"Lay your blades on the ground," continued the constable, "and strike eight blows with the sheaths upon the fellow's shoulders."

The red blood rose in Perinet's face at the order. He started from the calm attitude he had assumed, and exclaimed in a hurried manner, to the constable:

"Monseigneur, this is the punishment of a soldier, and I am a citizen."

D'Armagnac appeared to take no notice of the armourer's appeal, but coldly uttered:

"Let it be done as I have ordered."

"It is the punishment of a serf—of a vassal," resumed Perinet, "and I am neither!"

"It is more fitted for you," returned D'Ar-

magnac, "since it thus touches you to the heart."

"Reflect, monseigneur," continued Perinet sternly, throwing off the two archers, who advanced to seize him, and grasping the arm of the constable: "reflect before you commit this degradation upon me; I would not pardon such an outrage, even from the king himself. Persist, and I swear not to rest day or night, until I am avenged!"

"I am not accustomed to heed either threats or supplications, when my orders have once gone forth," proceeded the constable, as he perceived several of the citizens in conference. "Give this man eight blows with the scabbards of your swords; and let them be bestowed in a manner that will cause him to recollect the constable for some time."

"We cannot suffer it," murmured a citizen; "he is, like us, a bourgeois."

"What is this, my masters?" demanded the constable fiercely. "Do you grumble? Let me see which of you will dare to rescue this man from the hands of my archers!"

The guard closed round the prisoner, as D'Armagnac spoke, and one of them proceeded

to divest him of his upper garments. Perinet offered no opposition, but pale with rage and emotion, remained fixed as a statue, and biting his under lip until the blood trickled down his chin. At a word from the constable, two men placed themselves on either side of the armourer, and prepared to strike him alternately on his naked shoulders, with their scabbards. D'Armagnac gave a sign, and the punishment commenced. At the first blow, a convulsive tremor ran over Perinet's frame; but it was not that of suffering. Although a crimson stripe across his back followed every blow, he started not, but with dilated nostril and knitted brows, kept his eye fixed upon D'Armagnac, gleaming with the fire of vengeance, until the account was completed, when his head sank upon his breast, and he faintly ejaculated, "I am degraded!"

"Let him go, now," cried the constable, as the eighth blow was struck. "It is the soldier I have punished, not the citizen. And be mindful, my masters," he added, turning to the bourgeois, "whichever of you shall thus quit his post, I will mark upon his shoulders the most noble red cross of Burgundy he can conceive, as I have done upon this man."

“I swear to God,” muttered Perinet between his teeth, “that you shall bear the sign also, *and I never yet was known to break my word!*”

The threat passed unheeded by the constable; the archers, throwing the armourer’s garments carelessly at his feet, again formed into rank, and D’Armagnac left the Place, followed by the citizens, except Bourdichon, who remained on duty.

For some time after their departure, Perinet continued standing with his arms folded in the same fixed attitude. Aroused, at length, by the pain which the cold air caused to his wounds, he gathered up his vest and pourpoint, and threw them carelessly over his bleeding shoulders. In so doing, his dagger fell from one of the pockets upon the ground. He picked it up eagerly, and examined the point.

“My tried companion!” he ejaculated; “they did not then seize thee! Thou hast now one more service than before to render me!”

Not caring to attract the attention of Bourdichon, who was keeping guard at his former post upon the bridge, Perinet silently resumed his old station behind the barrier, which had served to break the pressure of the crowd

during the day. Again all was quiet in the Place. A few stars were twinkling in the heavens, but not sufficient to afford any light; whilst the few scattered cressets which the wind permitted to remain unextinguished, were too far distant to be of the least service. Thus screened from observation, the armourer once more awaited the tidings he might hear of Bourdon's fate.

As the last stroke of ten died away in echoes amongst the pointed towers of the Palais de Justice, the portal of the Grand Châtelet slowly opened, and three soldiers appeared on the threshold. The first of these carried a torch; and by its glare he directed the steps of the other two, who were staggering under the weight of a large burthen which they carried between them. From his ambush Perinet could observe all that passed, and he was horrified at perceiving the envelope stained with large clots of blood. The men passed slowly across the Place, and then, halting at the very barrier behind which Perinet was concealed, sent their torch-bearer forward to exchange the pass-word with Bourdichon, who still remained on the bridge. As they dropped their load with some force upon the ground, a deep low groan issued from

the sack. Perinet heard it, and it struck an icy terror to his soul. Firmly grasping his dagger, he glided noiselessly round the barrier, unseen in the obscurity that prevailed, and stood close to the two soldiers.

The archer who advanced upon the Pont aux Meuniers had dismissed Bourdichon ; and now prepared to return to his fellows, with the information that the coast was clear. The men stooped to résume their burthen, when, swift as thought, Perinet buried his dagger in the side of one, and before the other could discern the accident, he had shared the same fate, and fell to the ground. The torchbearer, alarmed at the rapidity of the attack, and thinking that a larger number of persons were engaged in the assault, from seeing his companions both struck down so suddenly, flew towards the Châtelet with cries for assistance, dropping his flambeau, which Perinet directly seized.

In an instant, the armourer ripped up the sack with his dagger, and the unfortunate Bourdon — pale, bleeding, and almost inanimate, rolled from its crimson folds.

“Fly, messire,” cried Perinet hastily, “you have not a second to lose ! Fly to Saint Jacques la Boucherie—it is a sanctuary, and I will meet

you there." Then darting to the Quai, as more soldiers issued from the Châtelet, he exclaimed: "Gervais! here is the cross—*Gloire à Dieu!* I have kept my word."

The faithful boatman was waiting, and he caught the precious signal as it fell. Perinet saw him cut the rope that held his boat, and push from the shore; then turning along the Quai, he fled precipitately.

Meanwhile, the expiring Bourdon had raised himself on his hands, and feebly endeavoured to move. But Perinet was ignorant that, although he had liberated him, the torture had crushed and mangled his limbs; and that the blood was still flowing from his wounds, as it clotted on the hard ground. Nevertheless, he contrived to drag himself towards the centre of the Place; and then fell insensible, as the reinforcement advanced from the Châtelet with numerous torches.

"They have escaped us!" cried a soldier, as he lifted his flambeau above his head, and gazed about the area.

"But they have left our prisoner," returned a man, in a close red hood, as he discovered Bourdon. "Let us finish our work."

At his signal, the others raised the chevalier,

and bearing him in their arms, advanced upon the bridge. One of them then mounted the parapet, and aided by his companions drew up the body after him. The next moment there was a heavy plunge below, and the Seine received its victim.

The sun rose brightly the next morning, and the river, sparkling in his beams, continued its rapid course, offering no trace of the foul deed which it concealed. But at evening, when the green expanse of the Pré aux Clercs resounded with the joyous merriment of the happy crowds assembled on it for their usual pastimes—when the clerks of the Bazoche and the students of Cluny mingled gaily in the dance with the grisettes of the city—the attention of the multitude was drawn away from their revelry by the report that a fisherman had discovered a body enveloped in a sack, below the Tour du Bois, on the opposite side of the Seine. The corpse was carried to the Grève, but its envelope remained in the possession of the boatman, bearing a motto which he was unable to decipher. The more learned of the bystanders traced this inscription in rude letters upon the crimsoned canvas—

“Laissez passer la justice du Roi!”

CHAPTER VI.

HOW ISABELLE AND D'ARMAGNAC PLAYED A DOUBLE GAME,
AND WHAT STEPS THE QUEEN TOOK TO AVENGE THE
DEATH OF BOURDON.

SEVERAL days had elapsed since the events of the last chapter, and queen Isabelle still remained in her château at Tours; but she was no longer a prisoner. Her relative and ally, the Duke of Burgundy, glad of any pretence to thwart the power of D'Armagnac, or cross his intentions, immediately upon hearing of her arrest, marched his troops from Paris, and succeeded, if not in vanquishing the forces of the constable, at least in counteracting his plans for the queen's detention; and allowing her to remain entirely her own mistress, and surrounded by her own people.

It was a lovely afternoon, and Isabelle was seated at one of the windows of her boudoir, gazing upon the fair expanse of country that

encircled the château, through which the sparkling Loire, reflecting the hue of the unclouded sky above, was murmuring in its course between flower-laden banks and the rich vineyards and orchards of sunny Touraine. But the heart of the queen was ill at ease. Nearly a week had passed without the arrival of the expected signal from the armourer; and she began to fear that some untoward event had befallen the chevalier; or that Perinet himself had been prevented from communicating with the château.

She was endeavouring, for the hundredth time, to invent some plausible reason for the delay, when a gentle knocking at the door of her apartment aroused her from her reverie. Before she could well reply, the arras was lifted on one side, and D'Armagnac entered the room.

Surprise at the unexpected intrusion, for a few seconds, prevented Isabelle from speaking. At length, with some effort to repress her emotion, she demanded the object of his visit.

"I shall be brief, madame," he replied coldly, as he threw his mailed gloves upon the table. "Let us not seek to hide our mutual sentiments from each other. I am your enemy; and the

fire that sparkles in your eyes—the quivering of your haughty lip, bespeaks your hate.”

“What strange event, then, can have made you seek me?” asked the queen.

“Circumstances, madame, which equally concern each of us. The Duke of Burgundy has declared open war against me. Now mark me, Isabelle,—having your husband in my power—being able to command his signature to any act I may propose—the victory is certain; but your avowed support of Burgundy (although your title of regent is but an empty sound) may prolong the strife until the English army, now threatening our shores, has advanced to conquer us.”

“I do not see your intent, monsieur,” observed the queen.

“Isabelle!” cried D’Armagnac with energy, placing a parchment on the table, “I am here on a mission of peace and amity. Abandon the rebellious faction who place their sole hope in the countenance you give to their plots; and in exchange,” he added, lowering his voice, “for your signature to that effect, at the bottom of this treaty, I offer you the life and freedom of the Chevalier de Bourdon.”

“Enough, monsieur, enough,” replied the queen in a tone of raillery, which, however, but ill disguised her trepidation. “You propose that I should desert my friends, and abdicate a title pronounced legal by all the kingdom ! and what do you offer in return ?—the life of a young man whose loyal devotion has been by you falsely construed into a criminal *liaison*. You mistake me, D’Armagnac—look in my face; you will see hate and contempt lighting up my eyes, but there is not yet the wild gleam of delirium or madness.”

“This is no subject for idle prevarication, madame,” answered D’Armagnac, as his countenance fell. “*You love Bourdon*—you would gladly purchase his blood and life, for they are identified with your own.”

The queen rose from her seat, and, approaching the table, exclaimed in a voice teeming with rage and emotion:

“You are frank with me, sir, and I will play the same part. I loved Bourdon deeply—nay, start not at the confession; we are without eaves-droppers—and had my brow carried twenty coronets I would have given them all for his liberty, so long as he was still living, and on

the road from Vincennes to Paris. But you have cast him into the Châtelet—you have closed upon him those fearful gates, which never reopen but for the egress of a corpse. And now you dare to speak to me of his liberty—of his life !”

“ And who has proved to you, madame, that he is dead ? ”

“ Who can prove that he still lives ? ” sternly demanded Isabelle.

“ This letter,” replied D’Armagnac, drawing the paper from his corslet.

The Queen gazed on the writing, and sank back from the constable, pale and trembling.

“ It is indeed his own ! ” she murmured, after a minute’s silence ; “ and he had not the courage to resist the torture ! Constable—this letter from Bourdon is as clear a proof of his death, as if I had witnessed his punishment. Give me the letter.”

Flushed with excitement, she advanced towards D’Armagnac, who calmly refolded the letter, and placed it in his belt. At this instant, the arras was withdrawn, and Marie, pale and breathless, entered the apartment.

“ He is saved, madame,” cried the girl, rush-

ing to the queen, and holding out a small gold cross; the signal has arrived!"

"The cross!" ejaculated Isabelle; "it is indeed true—he lives!" Then suddenly recollecting the presence of D'Armagnac, she muttered to herself; "and I was about to destroy him!" Constable!" she continued aloud; "you spoke to me of a treaty—where is it?"

"It is here, madame," replied D'Armagnac, taking up the parchment, and gazing at the Queen as though he would penetrate her inmost heart. "I will read it to you. 'We, Isabelle de Bavière, Queen of France, declare that we will for ever abandon the rebellious cause of the Duke of Burgundy; and that we will never take up arms against our lord the king, provided that the Chevalier de Bourdon be set at liberty, and we receive an assurance of his future safety.'"

"And if I sign that?" asked Isabelle.

"Bourdon shall be with you before an hour has elapsed," replied D'Armagnac.

The Queen approached the table and signed the treaties, which D'Armagnac calmly folded up and placed with the letter, as an ill-disguised smile of triumph passed over his features. Then making a slight obeisance to the Queen, he left the apartment.

The instant he had departed, Isabelle eagerly questioned Marie respecting the transmission of the cross which had brought tidings of Bourdon's life. She was surprised to find that it had not been received from Perinet, whilst Marie was no less anxious to ascertain what circumstances had detained her lover. The boatman Gervais, to whom the armourer had thrown the signal from the parapet of the Quai, had met with many unforeseen delays on his way from Paris to Tours, and but for the change in the queen's fortunes, effected by the interference of Burgundy, would possibly never have arrived with his mistaken charge.

But whilst these events were transpiring, the body of Bourdon had been found in the Seine, and recognised by Perinet at the Grève, which, at this period, answered to the *Morgue* of modern Paris. Horrified at the discovery, and reflecting upon the false tidings which he had transmitted to the queen, and the trouble they might occasion, he left the capital immediately, nor rested day or night until he reached the château—where he arrived on the very evening of the queen's interview with D'Armagnac.

Isabelle and Marie were alone when he ar-

rived. As he entered the apartment, a cry of surprise broke from the lips of the queen, and one of joy from his betrothed.

“Spurn me from your presence, madame!” he exclaimed, in answer to the queen’s reception. “I sent you a message of joy, and hope——”

“For which I blessed you, Perinet,” interrupted the queen. “It was my cross—the signal of Bourdon’s safety.”

“It should have been a token of death and vengeance!” faltered the armourer.

“Perinet! for our Lady’s sake, what mean you?” demanded the queen hurriedly.

“I knew not when I told him to reach the sanctuary at St. Jacques-la-Boucherie, that he could not fly. I knew not that the torture had lacerated and crushed his limbs, or that I should find his body the next day at the Grève!”

“Dead?” cried the queen, as she fell back into her fauteuil, pale as marble. “Bourdon dead! and without an effort to save him! And his assassin was here — here, unarmed and alone, this afternoon!”

“D’Armagnac at Tours!” cried Perinet.

“He was here! one word of mine would have been his destruction, and I never spoke it. Perinet, *you* have saved him; if I had not received the cross, I could have laughed at his oaths and promises. You alone have done all this;” and covering her face with her hands, she sank back and wept bitterly.

For a few seconds neither party spoke. The queen gave way to the most violent grief, and Perinet appeared lost in thought. At length, he spoke.

“I will repair this fatal error, madame, if my life pay for it. Were I to deliver the constable into your hands—were I not only to do this, but moreover to give up to you our good city of Paris, I should have done more good than evil, should I not? You will then pardon me; and I trust, in addition, accord me one favour I may ask.”

“I would throw away my existence could you—but no—it is impossible!” continued the queen, checking herself. “You cannot do it.”

“My father is guardian of the Porte St. Germain,” answered Perinet; “he keeps the keys under his pillow. I can take them, and open the gates.”

"You would not do this, Perinet?" inquired Marie, timidly glancing at her lover.

"Silence, child!" cried the queen. "But in what has the constable offended you, that you would thus betray him?"

"It is of small moment, madame," replied Perinet. "You promise to grant me a favour, and if you keep your word, I will be equally trustworthy."

"What wish you—is it Marie?"

"No, madame; until I am avenged I shall not be worthy of her."

"Is it gold—nobility—honour?"

"Nothing pertaining to those empty sounds, madame. Here is a seal and parchment. As regent of France, you have power to dispose of the life or death of any of your subjects."

"What wish you, then?"

"I require your signature to this document; it will give me possession of a life which I can dispose of as I choose—which I can claim even from the executioner!"

"It is neither that of the dauphin nor the king?" demanded Isabelle.

"Neither, madame."

"I agree, then: give me the parchment."

And as she ran her eyes over the contents she said, "The name must be inserted, Perinet; whose life do you wish to possess?"

"That of the Constable D'Armagnac!" replied the armourer.

The queen signed the paper, and returned it to Perinet, who received it with a glow of exultation, adding:—

"'Tis well, madame; you have kept your promise, and mine shall be equally sacred. You have five hundred lances in the town of Pontoise, who wait but your signal, and the Duke of Burgundy needs but your presence. In three days, you shall hold your court in the Louvre!"

CHAPTER VII.

HOW PERINET PREPARED TO DELIVER UP THE CITY INTO
THE HANDS OF ISABELLE.

THE wall which Philip Augustus built, in 1190, to surround the old city of Paris, commenced on both sides the river from a little above the Pont des Arts, and terminated at the east, a short distance below the two bridges of Marie and La Tournelle, which now lead across from the north and south to the Isle of St. Louis. It was surmounted throughout by a parapet, and fortified by towers at regular intervals; as well as four of larger size at its extremities on the banks of the river, named Les Tours du Bois, de Billi, de la Tournelle, and the Tour de Nesle—the latter being celebrated as the scene of one of the most fearful legends ever handed down to posterity. The gates appear to have been twelve or thirteen in number, and at the period of our story (1418) opened at once upon the plains sur-

rounding the city ; there being merely a few clusters of buildings to break the expanse. The Porte St. Germain—the keys of which were under the guardianship of Master Lelerc,—was situated as nearly as may be upon the site of the present Carrefour de l'Odeon, and formed one of the principal entrances to the city from the faubourg of the same name. The house of Perinet's father was built against this wall, having some of its upper windows opening upon the ramparts ; whilst the lower part communicated with the Rue de Paon, a street no longer existing.

Little of life was stirring in the streets of old Paris after sunset, nor indeed was it safe to be alone in any spot not immediately in sight of the sentinels upon the wall. The dark and narrow thoroughfares derived the chief part of their illumination from the windows of the houses, or the occasional passage of the marching watch, bearing cressets and flambeaux ; but when these had paraded, and the lights in the dwellings were extinguished, the city was wrapped in complete obscurity. It may be readily conceived that few passengers were abroad. Theft and murder were, under cover of the darkness, committed with

impunity; and the wretched unpaved roads, difficult to traverse in the day-time, were after nightfall perfectly impassable.

It is no wonder, then, that the inhabitants of the quartier adjacent to the Porte St. Germain were roused from their wonted quietude by an unusual turmoil in the streets some time after sunset, a few days subsequent to Perinet's interview with Queen Isabelle at Tours; or that they speedily turned out into the open air to learn the cause of so strange a disturbance. The space in front of the gate was occupied by a large body of archers bearing torches, who kept clear a large square, in the centre of which a herald was reading a proclamation. But the general confusion prevented it from being heard by more than the few immediately around him; and it was not until he had read it two or three times, that the bourgeois thoroughly understood its meaning, which was to this effect:

“In the name of our Lord the King, Charles the VI. It having been proved upon the confessions of the Chevalier de Bourdon, that a criminal attachment existed between him and the queen, who, forgetful of her virtue and her rank, has proposed to monsieur the

constable to abandon her new allies, on the sole condition that the chevalier should be restored to her; as by this treaty, signed by her own hand at Tours, she confesses the crime herself, the king, aided by his counsel, deposes the Queen Isabelle, declares her acts null and void, and banishes her for ever from the kingdom."

A murmur of surprise and indignation rose from the crowd, when they perfectly understood the purport of the herald's proclamation, which, it will be seen, the depth of the constable had planned from the queen's admission during their last interview. Nor was their excitement quelled, as a detachment of the guard surrounded the dwelling of Master Leclerc, whilst their captain clamoured loudly at the gate for admission.

The gate-keeper had come out upon the ramparts at the beginning of the confusion, and now demanded of the archer what he wanted.

"You must open your doors, in the king's name," was the reply.

"And why has this order been given?" asked Leclerc.

“Because the queen has men concealed in Paris who are devoted to her cause, and we have orders to find their hiding-places.”

“You can enter, sir captain,” replied Le-clerc; “this key will admit you;” and tying his scarf round the key, that it might be easily seen, he threw it down to the archer, who directly opened the door of the house, and went in, accompanied by all his men, except one, whom he left on guard at the entrance.

The crowd gathered round the porch, and one or two were about to interrogate the guard, when an amazon forced her way through the mass, and giving the archer a pull, which turned him right round, sharply exclaimed,

“So, Master Bourdichon, it is you, is it? Inform me directly what all this means, and who it is they are looking after.”

“My wife!” cried the unhappy little man, as he recognised his helpmate. “Hush! it is Perinet they are seeking.”

“And wherefore?”

“Because the constable is very anxious to hang him,” was the reply, in a low voice.

“Miserable pigmy!” cried Dame Bourdichon, bestowing upon him a cuff which nearly

knocked him through the door-way; "you have betrayed him, then!"

"Wife! wife!" exclaimed the luckless bourgeois, "I couldn't help it. They took me into the Châtelet, and tied me down upon an iron bed; and in two minutes the plate got so hot, that in comparison to it, the fire of the infernal regions was as mild as a summer breeze! I tell you, you would have betrayed your father and mother in such a strait."

Dame Bourdichon was about to seize the halberd from her husband, and inflict upon him summary punishment, when the archers re-appeared from the house, having discovered no one beyond the usual inmates of the dwelling. The shrew fell back at their approach, and the whole body marched away, Master Bourdichon praying inwardly that something might occur which should empower him to send his wife into the Châtelet.

In another quarter of an hour, all was again tranquil; the crowd had returned to their homes, and the band of soldiers proceeded to read the proclamation in another part of the city. But a light still burnt in the chamber of Master Leclerc, for his mind was ill at ease, and he was pacing his room in extreme

inquietude. The visit of the soldiers had somewhat alarmed him, and Perinet had been absent from Paris for several days, without his father receiving any tidings of his safety.

He opened one of the windows of his room, and stepped out upon the ramparts. It was a starlight night, and the objects immediately below the wall were plainly visible; but beyond a hundred yards' distance all was wrapped in gloom, through which could, however, be discovered the illuminated windows of the churches of St. Sulpice, and St. Germain des Prés, where mass was being performed. As he leaned against the embattlement of the turret, musing upon the occurrences of the evening, he was startled by the challenge of the sentinel on the gate, his practised ear having detected some slight movement below.

"*Qui vive?*" demanded the man sternly.

"A bourgeois of Paris," was the reply.

"You cannot enter," returned the soldier; "it is the order of the constable."

"Hold!" cried Leclerc, "I should know that voice. He is an acquaintance, Olivier, and I will answer for his entrance. Tell him I will open the wicket for him."

The sentinel conveyed the intimation of Le-

clerc to the stranger, as the former descended to the gate. In a minute or two he returned, followed by another person wrapped in a cloak.

"Is this new comer really one of your friends, monsieur?" demanded the patrol, approaching Master Leclerc.

"It is all right," was the reply, "and I will be answerable for him."

The sentinel appeared satisfied, and continued his round, whilst Leclerc entered his house with the stranger. He closed the windows and the shutters with apparent caution; and then the visitor threw off his cloak and hat, and the father and son were together—for it was Perinet.

"Once more then, my son," exclaimed the old man, embracing him, "you are beneath my roof. I have been tortured with suspense, Perinet, during your absence; a hundred silly fears have destroyed my peace. But you must pardon the inquietude of a father, for I have but you in the world to love."

The armourer knelt at the old man's feet, who raised him tenderly.

"You have done well to come to my house this night, Perinet," continued Leclerc; "mischiefs are abroad; the city is in a perturbed state,

and I know that your young blood is ardent and impatient. You are not, I trust, going to return home?"

"I came hither, my father, to beg an asylum for the night."

"There is a bed ready for you in the next chamber. But why," continued Leclerc, "are your features so sombre and pensive? they are usually joyous and laughing when you are here."

"Nothing, my father—nothing has occurred, that I am aware of," replied the armourer, hesitating and confused.

"I believe you," continued Leclerc; "and yet, your apparent agitation has somewhat alarmed me. It is not an hour since, that the archers of the constable came to this house, in search of some one whose name I could not learn."

"Well, my father," replied Perinet, "it could not be me—I have done nothing; and have moreover been several days absent from Paris. What has alarmed you?"

"I know you were punished by D'Armagnac—it is the talk of the city," said Leclerc. "Did you not threaten him at the time with hints of future vengeance?"

"I, my father! no, I was silent," answered

Perinet, though the tone in which he spoke belied his words. "But you must excuse me—I am fatigued, and would seek repose, for the night is now far advanced."

As he spoke, he rose from his seat and took a lamp from the table. His father embraced him anew, and gazed at him fondly as he entered his chamber. Then placing the keys of the Porte St. Germain under his pillow, he threw himself upon his bed, and soon fell fast asleep.

"So," muttered Perinet, as he heard the steady breathing of his father, "he sleeps calmly, and I am watching to bring eternal shame upon his grey hairs—I am here to betray—to ruin him! Vengeance, love, ambition—fiendish passions! ye have triumphed over every other feeling; ye have made me your puppet, and I dare not shrink from my task. The troops of Burgundy are by this time within earshot of the walls, and the keys that shall admit them are beneath my father's pillow. Demons of crime! give me steadfastness of purpose, or the violent throbbings of my heart will waken him, and all will be lost. Haughty D'Armagnac—the red cross which I swore you should wear, will be dearly bought; but you shall still carry it."

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW PERINET STOLE THE KEYS FROM HIS FATHER, AND HOW
ISABELLE TOOK POSSESSION OF PARIS.

THE hour of midnight was proclaimed from the bell-tower of the adjacent "Hostel de Rouen," and the watchword of the sentinels, passed along the ramparts from one to the other, died away in the extreme distance, as Perinet, with faltering step, left his own room, and advanced towards the couch on which his father was sleeping. Scarcely daring to breathe, he approached the bed. As he gazed upon Leclerc's calm features, a convulsive shivering ran over his frame, and he leant against the chimney-piece for support. But the light of a small lamp that was burning in the room showed a portion of the chain on which the keys of the gates were hung, just visible from under the old man's pillow; and the sight of this recalled him to the object of his adventure.

Summoning up all his decision, he passed his hand to the head of the bed, and seized the chain; but, slight as was the disturbance caused by the attempt, it had the effect of rousing Leclerc, who, accustomed to be called up at all hours to admit the constable or his emissaries, was awakened by the most trifling noise. The guardian sprang up, and fixed his gaze upon his son, as the latter drew the keys rapidly away, and concealed them beneath his cloak.

“Perinet!” cried Leclerc, with the confused ideas of a man whose slumber has been suddenly broken, “Perinet! what do you here?”

The armourer remained silent,—apparently stupified at the unexpected awaking of his father.

“Why do I find you at my bed-side?” continued Leclerc. “You have not slept yourself. Answer me—why do you remain thus gazing at me so vacantly?” Then mechanically passing his hand under his pillow, he ejaculated, “Where are my keys?—they are gone! Perinet, you have deceived me—you have stolen my keys!”

“I—my father!” confusedly replied the armourer.

“ You have stolen them from beneath my pillow, as I slept. Restore them immediately, and I will seek no further to demand the reasons for this black proceeding.”

“ They are here, my father,” replied Perinet, drawing the bunch from his girdle; “ they are here—but I cannot give them back—I must keep them.”

“ Restore them, I tell you,” cried Leclerc.

“ I cannot. They are in my possession, and must remain so. I have been degraded—degraded as a vassal, before all! I spoke as a man, and was beaten! I held my peace, and still I was beaten! No one screened me—no one defended me! But I have the keys of Paris, and they will avenge me.”

The old man turned pale with emotion, as he gazed upon his son. “ I have kept those keys,” he faltered out, “ faithfully and truly for twenty long years. The Bourguignians are waiting for them—I know it. You have promised to deliver them up, even at the cost of my life! —Perinet,” he continued, seizing his son’s arm as he leaped from the couch, “ my keys! my keys! Restore them, I implore you.”

“ Away!” cried the armourer, “ you cannot

have them—they are mine—leave them in my possession.”

“Never!” cried Leclerc, clinging to his son with desperate energy.

“Away,” repeated Perinet, “I implore you—I *command* it—or you will drive my soul to perdition!” and he thrust the old man from him with such power, that he reeled and fell upon the bed.

“You have your hand upon your dagger!” cried Leclerc, in breathless accents. “Perinet, do you not see how vainly you strive to draw it from its sheath? The gaze of your father has transfixed your arm to your side.—Boy, you have not calculated the task which you undertook: what remains to be done is beyond your power.”

The armourer quivered beneath the reproaches of Leclerc. He drew the polished blade from its sheath, and cast it from him; then falling on his knees at the bed-side, clung to his father’s prostrate form. “Do you then kneel to me, Perinet?” exclaimed Leclerc: “Is it thus that you would say—‘Old man, let me dishonour thee? What matter shame and infamy at thy advanced age?’”

“ My father !”

“ Behold me at thy feet,” continued Leclerc, in bitter irony, “ I—thy son—thy sole pride—whose deeds thou didst so love to vaunt, but whom thou canst not now speak of !”

“ Enough, my father—spare me, I implore you !” cried the agonized son.

“ It is with prayers and entreaties you would tell me all this,” said Leclerc. “ Rise, Perinet ; you have struck a blow to my heart, far more cruel than your dagger could have given.”

“ You may curse me, father—you may kill me, an’ you will ; but I have sworn an oath, and I must accomplish it. Ha ! we are interrupted.”

As he was speaking, a loud knocking was heard at the door, and the confused hum of voices, and tread of an apparently large body of men, rose from the street below. Leclerc went into the balcony to ascertain the cause of the disturbance ; and Perinet, agitated by the slightest sound, concealed himself behind the heavy drapery which, in accordance with the custom of the period, shrouded the door that led from his father’s room to his own chamber.

A single glance sufficed to show Leclerc

that D'Armagnac was at the head of the troop of archers who now clamoured for admittance into his house. He therefore immediately descended the small flight of stairs in the body of the wall, and unlocking the wicket at the bottom, ushered the constable and a few of his leading men upon the ramparts.

"May I know your pleasure, monseigneur?" asked the guardian of the keys.

For a few seconds, D'Armagnac made no reply. Then, assuming a stern expression of countenance, he pointed with his truncheon towards his guards. "You must follow those men, Leclerc," he said, "the keys of the Porte St. Germain are no longer in your possession."

"The keys withdrawn, sir! Of what ill-doing have I been found guilty, to merit this disgrace?" asked the old man.

"Your son has committed a crime, for which his head ought to pay the forfeit," replied D'Armagnac; and you are suspected of having assisted in his escape. This man," he continued, pointing to Bourdichon, who formed one of his escort, "has the commission to replace you."

"Constable, I implore you," cried Leclerc,

“drive me not thus away in the middle of the night. To-morrow, monseigneur—wait but until to-morrow, and I will obey you.”

“It is with deep regret I am compelled to act in this manner,” replied the constable coldly ; “for I counted always upon your fidelity. Deliver the keys to Bourdichon, and follow my archers. Where are they?”

“There, monseigneur—in my chamber.”

This conversation upon the ramparts had not been lost upon Perinet. The window which led out upon the platform was open, and being situated close to where he was concealed, his ear drew in every syllable. Aware that the keys must be produced, he hurriedly detached the one which opened the principal gate from the iron ring on which they were placed, and then gliding across the room, placed the bunch upon the table; concealing himself once more behind the drapery, just as Bourdichon, at the command of the constable, entered the room to take his new charge. It was a moment of keen suspense to Leclerc, who, believing that Perinet still kept the keys, had expected Bourdichon would return without them. But his confidence was restored, as he saw the archer step out upon the ramparts with them in his hand.

"I pity you, Leclerc," said D'Armagnac, as the guardian silently took his place amongst the archers; but the order once passed, cannot be revoked."

"Constable!" exclaimed Leclerc, advancing and kneeling before him, "you will not repulse an old man who throws himself at your feet to beg the life of his only son. One word, one promise for his safety, and I shall rest content with my destiny. Is there nothing to hope for, monseigneur?" he continued, as he observed the constable's immoveable features: "neither pity nor pardon? I will kneel to you then no longer, sir: but fate may do her worst. Gentlemen, I am your prisoner."

Thus speaking, he fell into the ranks of the guard that attended upon the constable, and the whole party then moved off along the ramparts, leaving only Master Bourdichon before Leclerc's house, and the sentinel who was upon guard over the Porte St. Germain.

As the sound of the retiring party died away, Perinet once more stole from his concealment, and hastily extinguished the lamp which Leclerc had left burning upon the table. Master Bourdichon continued gazing after the escort of the

constable, until the blaze of the last cresset faded in the distance; and then feeling somewhat cold, and withal weary, entered the house, mumbling a variety of unconnected sentences relative to his new occupation, and the probable punishment or imprisonment which awaited the ex-guardian.

There was a small lantern-tower room at the summit of Leclerc's house, in which a light was constantly burning all night; as much for the purpose of keeping the sentinel on the alert, whose business it was occasionally to ascend and trim it, as to serve for a beacon to the traveller, over the rough bridle-roads and obscure paths that intersected the faubourgs of the old city. Finding that the lamp was extinguished in the room below, Bourdichon, after various futile attempts to kindle a flame from the few sparks amidst the embers on the hearth, groped his way to the foot of the staircase leading to this observatory, and ascended it, with the intention of re-lighting his lamp from the beacon above. This was exactly the proceeding which Perinet had wished to bring about. Gliding from the arras, he followed the bourgeois across the room with noiseless step; his

progress being, moreover, covered by the incessant displacement of different articles of furniture, which Bourdichon, in his ignorance of their situation, was perpetually coming in contact with. At length, the archer discovered the door leading to the upper part of the house; which he had no sooner passed, than Perinet drew it to after him, and bolted it on the near side. Leaving the unconscious prisoner to continue his ascent, he returned to his old position; and ascertaining that the back of the sentinel was turned towards him, crept out upon the ramparts. But at the moment that he gained the parapet, the sentinel, apparently alarmed at an unexpected noise, gave the cry of alarm, in a loud impressive voice. Not an instant was to be lost. Perinet was convinced that the guard had perceived the troops of Burgundy in the Pré aux Clercs, where they had silently advanced, according to agreement. Springing upon the sentinel, who had climbed the parapet, apparently to obtain a better view of the country, he threw all his power into one effort, and hurled the luckless warder into the fosse beneath the wall. Then, hastily drawing a briquet from his pouch, he

procured a light, and set fire to the draperies that surrounded the windows of Leclerc's house ; having made sure that Bourdichon, in the event of the conflagration, could escape along the roof.

Already had the sentinels, aroused at the challenge from the Porte St. Germain, prepared to arouse the troops, and for that purpose now hurried along the ramparts in every direction. But, as the fire caught the furniture of the house, a thousand torches, in reply to the signal, burst forth from the champaign below : whose light was thrown back from the countless suits of mail that were now approaching the gates. Rushing down the staircase in the wall, Perinet threw open the portals, as the leaders of the Bourguignian force came up to them ; and in another minute they were pouring, with the force and impetuosity of a swollen mountain torrent, into the city. On they came, lighted by the flames from Leclerc's late habitation, and rousing the frightened citizens from their beds by their tumultuous entry ; in the midst of which, encircled by a ring of blazing cressets, and guarded by a body of picked men-at-arms, Isabelle de Bavière rode through the gate,

mounted on a splendid palfrey, the last present of the Duc de Bourgogne.

“We have done well, messieurs,” she exclaimed, as she reined in her steed in the centre of the square: “Graville: L’Isle Adam, you will seek the king, and make him your prisoner—we shall have gained nothing if he escapes us. And now to the Hôtel St. Paul—’tis the abode of D’Armagnac; but remember—living or dead, his body belongs to Perinet Leclerc.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ATTACK UPON THE HOTEL ST. PAUL.

THE alarm created by the entrance of Isabelle, and the troops of Burgundy, into the city, soon spread over every quarter. The sentinels on the ramparts catching the sound of the mighty uproar, and perceiving the red glare in the sky from the conflagration of Leclerc's house, the flames from which now rose above the surrounding buildings, illuminating all the adjacent spires and towers with a vivid glare, passed the word of danger from one to the other; and in a few minutes it had gone the round of the city—at least that part of it which was situated on the south bank of the Seine. Nor was the alarm confined to the localities immediately contiguous to the walls. The different movements which were going on in the crowded streets between the Porte St.

Germain, and the Rue de la Harpe—the frequent passage of the couriers, as their horses clattered furiously along them, to points with which it was necessary to be in communication—the constant thronging of horsemen and persons bearing torches through the usually deserted thoroughfares, and all the growing bustle attendant upon the eve of so eventful a struggle, had awakened from slumber all the inhabitants of the quarters principally disturbed by the *émeute*. Rising from their beds, they left their houses and sought the streets, to gain some information as to the cause of the wild uproar. But no one had time, or cared to answer their questions; and, hurried on by the throng of archers, cavalry, and the excited multitude that accompanied them, they were irresistibly borne along towards the heart of the city.

But a short time elapsed ere the alarm became general. A few of the more resolute of Isabelle's troops, by the orders of Perinet, pressed on towards the Petit Pont, bearing down all who opposed their progress; and on reaching the abode of the armourer, distributed all the weapons they found in his workshop to the bourgeois and rabble that followed them.

A few of the constable's guard, collected hurriedly together, offered some slight resistance at the foot of the bridge; but they were soon overcome, the excited revolvers hurling all those who were not immediately cut down over the low parapet of the bridge, into the rapid Seine, wherein, by reason of their heavy and cumbersome armour, they were drowned. Passing into the open space before the cathedral of *Nôtre Dame*, they halted for a few minutes to collect themselves into something like order; then, again pressing on over the *Pont au Change*, on the northern side of the *Isle du Palais*, they divided into two unequal parties. The lesser one proceeded to take possession of the *Hôtel de Ville*, dispatching a few men to sound the dreaded tocsin from the bell-tower of *St. Germain l'Auxerrois*; and the more powerful division immediately commenced an attack upon the *Grand Châtelet*, where they knew many favourable to their cause, and, from their station, likely to exert some influence over the citizens, were in confinement.

Ten minutes after the bell had rung its sounds of omen over Paris, the city was in a state of general insurrection. The windows of the ma-

majority of the buildings were lighted up in haste, such being the almost compulsory usage upon such occasions ; and the tenants of the smaller houses following this example, the city was speedily illuminated in every part. In an hour from the period of the entrance of the Bourguignians, the most powerful barricades had been thrown up in the various streets, composed, in lieu of paving stones, of furniture, unceremoniously taken from the adjacent houses ; whilst the populace, on gaining access to the Châtelet, found the majority of the chains which had been used, up to 1382, to barricade the streets and the river ; and fixing them to the gigantic hooks which still remained in the corner houses, thus effectually precluded the attacks of an opposing force.

The reader may possibly remember that we left Master Bourdichon enclosed in the observatory of Leclerc's house, at the time it was set fire to. As Perinet had opened the tower door, the honest bourgeois was not long in gaining the streets ; and being recognised by the crowd, he was immediately ordered to conduct a detachment of the queen's troops to the Hôtel St. Paul, the palace which formed the residence

of the constable, and where it was known he had the hapless king in his charge. He was not long in obeying the command, partly because he saw the utter futility of offering anything like opposition to their orders, but principally from his wish to look after the safety of his own home, which was situated close to the hôtel; and where the struggle would in all probability be the fiercest, from the contiguity of the Bastile, which was garrisoned with the chief part of D'Armagnac's available forces. Being mounted upon a horse, with an archer on each side of him, as much for the sake of keeping him on his steed, as to prevent him from deserting the party, he set forth; and leading them to the Tournelle, they crossed the river in detachments, seizing all the boats they could find, and by this means arrived on the quai adjoining the hôtel, much sooner than they could have done by going through the city, and across the bridges, all of which were by this time barricaded and impassable. Collecting on the river's bank in silence, the troops then rushed on to the Rue St. Antoine, and, as they now were perfectly acquainted with the localities, took less heed of their guide. Where-

upon Master Bourdichon, perceiving that he was approaching his house, gave a loud cheer of encouragement, and crying out, "Down with Armagnac," quietly turned into his own *porte cochère*, which stood open, and slipped off from his horse. From the passage, a small panel conducted into the shop, and of this he had contrived to preserve the key in the confusion. But he was somewhat surprised to find it yielded with extreme difficulty to his efforts, as if a powerful force was counteracting his endeavours on the other side. Bringing all his strength into play, he pushed it open, and was somewhat relieved in his ideas of plunder and invasion, to find the obstacle was no other than his wife; who, half-dead with fear, from the tumult in the street, the alarm-bell, and the distant conflagrations, had placed a heavy chair against the panel, and seated herself in it, the more effectually to repel any intruders.

As Bourdichon entered, encased in armour, and begrimed with dirt and smoke, the first act of his better half was to fall down on her knees and implore mercy, taking him for one of the invading party. But the sound of his voice recalled her to her senses.

“Sainte Marie!” she exclaimed, “it is only my husband.”

“The same, wife; the same;” gasped the bourgeois, sinking down into the chair his wife had quitted: “Real flesh and bone, and naught beside.”

“And what is all this dreadful uproar?” demanded his wife. “For the last half hour the fearful tumult has almost deprived me of my faculties.”

Master Bourdichon inwardly wished that speech might have ranked amongst the deprivations. But, fearing to excite his wife’s anger, when he had no one to defend him, he merely answered, “They are going to kill the constable.”

As he spoke, a ray of light, more vivid than any which had yet been perceived, shot up amidst the roar of a thousand wild voices, and apparently close to Bourdichon’s abode, rendering the apartment as light as noontide, and every object distinctly visible.

“’Tis the Hôtel St. Paul!” cried Dame Bourdichon. “They have set fire to it!”

“They could not find the constable,” replied the bourgeois; “and so they mean to roast him alive in his hiding-place.”

“The flames increase!” exclaimed his wife, “and may possibly catch our house! I have left the top windows open, and the wind will carry the burning embers into the chamber.”

“I will go and close them,” returned her husband. “If they knock without in my absence, do not answer. Master Bourdichon! with the most innocent intentions, into what a wasp’s nest have you thrust your unlucky head!”

As Bourdichon departed up stairs, grumbling as he went, his wife hastily tried the various fastenings of the apartment. The shutter of the window remained insecure, and she approached to close it, when a violent blow upon the outside made her shrink back, terrified and powerless. The knocks were repeated; she heard the glass of the casement shivered to pieces, and immediately afterwards, the shutter was beaten forcibly into the room, and D’Armagnac appeared at the opening, pale and distracted; his dagger in his teeth, and staggering beneath the weight of a body which he was carrying. With some difficulty he passed through the low window, and entered the room.

"Silence, woman, on your life!" he exclaimed sternly, as Dame Bourdichon commenced crying loudly for aid.

"Holy Mother!" cried the dame, recognising him, "it is the constable!"

For an instant D'Armagnac replied not; but placing his burthen, enveloped in a long grey mantle, in a chair, closed the window, as well as its shattered state would allow, and hastily replaced the shutter. Then, turning to the dame he said:

"You are right — I am D'Armagnac, the constable of France, and I place myself under your protection! Holy powers!" he continued energetically, "to be thus surprised in the middle of the night, without arms or defence. But I will yet escape the felons who have betrayed me; they will not think to search me here. Woman! you will not betray me?"

"My lord!" cried the dame, overcome to find herself in such august presence, "I swear to keep your secret. But you are not alone;" and she pointed to the form he had brought with him.

"It is an old man," replied the constable: "an old servant, whose room was on fire as I

left the hôtel: he would have been burnt had I not brought him here."

"Look you, how he trembles!" exclaimed Dame Bourdichon.

The unhappy king, for it was indeed Charles whom D'Armagnac had brought with him, feebly put aside a portion of the mantle that covered his face; and, looking with a vacant expression at the constable, muttered:

"I am cold—very, very cold."

"Quick! quick! mother!" cried D'Armagnac; "rekindle the fire; the hand of this old man is cold as ice."

"I will go and seek some wood, my lord," she replied, as she left the apartment. For the last few minutes the tumult in the street had been less violent, or probably the dame would have lacked courage to go alone.

"Still those cries!" thought D'Armagnac, as he heard the distant shouts, Burgundy! Burgundy! in the heart of Paris. "Who could have given up the keys? Fool that I was, to allow myself to be surprised like a child—to know that whilst I was sleeping, treason kept its untiring watch. All is not yet lost: the king, whom my enemies are now

seeking in all directions, is there—there, in my power! Oh, that he could but understand me! But he remains insensible to all around him; he is even unconscious of my presence.”

He approached the king, and seizing his emaciated arm, endeavoured to rouse him from his apathy.

“Sire!” he exclaimed, with vehemence, “I—your constable—have saved your life! The Bourguignians have entered the city, and I have concealed you here, until a party of my own guards can convey you to the Bastille, which is impregnable. Sire! do you hear me?”

The hapless monarch threw an unmeaning glance at the constable, and muttering, “I am very cold,” again relapsed into silence.

“Still senseless,” remarked the constable; “and yet in this poor witless creature is comprised all my power. Fortunately, the woman has not recognised him.”

As Dame Bourdichon re-appeared, carrying some wood, with which she speedily raised a fire from the embers, the king left his seat, and crouched down on a settle under the spacious chimney, still wrapping his mantle closely round

him. Whilst he was thus occupied, some fresh cries resounded from the street.

“At last, they are here ;” cried D’Armagnac, as he heard his name pronounced amidst the tumult. “Open that door, woman—they are my friends who come this way.”

Being assured there was no great danger to be dreaded, Dame Bourdichon opened the door, and directly afterwards, upon a signal from D’Armagnac, a party of his guards entered, headed by Dupuy, who started with surprise upon seeing the constable.

“We have no time for explanation, Dupuy,” cried D’Armagnac hastily. “Give me a sword ; and tell me—where is the dauphin Charles ?”

“Duchâtel has saved him, sire,” replied Dupuy, “he is in safety at the Bastile.” Then lowering his voice, he added, “and the king, what has become of him ?”

“He is also preserved,” replied D’Armagnac, in the same tone, directing his eyes towards the chimney place, where the monarch still remained cowering over the fire. “Silence—all may yet be well.”

“It is necessary that the soldiers should see

you, my lord," continued Dupuy. "They begin to mistrust your absence."

"Do they defend the posts with success?" asked D'Armagnac.

"Those at the Châtelet are all slaughtered, sire; and the prison doors thrown open; but the Genoese archers, at the Louvre, have repulsed every attack."

"I will go and join them, Dupuy—I leave the king in your hands; conduct him to the Bastile, where he will be secure. You will find me at the Louvre, if I can reach it. A few of your archers will accompany me thither, with a guide who can lead us away from the Bourguignian sentinels."

"Ho! Master Bourdichon!" cried the dame, as she heard the last part of the constable's speech, to her husband, who from fear had remained upon the stairs for the last half hour. "The constable requires a guide, and you must serve him."

"Thou here!" exclaimed D'Armagnac, as Bourdichon crept forward. "Where are the keys of the Porte St. Germain which I entrusted to you?"

The bourgeois was unable to reply, but his

wife came to his assistance. "My lord," she exclaimed, "they burnt the gate and were going to put him on the top of the fire, when he managed to escape. He will serve as a good guide, for he knows all the Bourguignian positions."

"Archers," cried the constable, "place that man amongst you, and if he betrays us cut his throat. Dupuy—you have received my orders. The king must be preserved, or he must die. Forwards."

Bourdichon opened the small door, and the constable with his guard passed through. A few archers remained with Dupuy, and these, with the king and Dame Bourdichon, were now left occupiers of the apartment.

As soon as they were gone, Dupuy advanced towards the king, and whispered to him, unheard by the rest,

"Will monseigneur accompany us to the Bastile?"

"You need not trouble yourself to disturb that old man," said Dame Bourdichon. "He is warm there, and does not need to be moved."

"Silence, woman," replied Dupuy, offering his arm to the king. The monarch stared at

him with the same vacant gaze, and was about to take it, when a loud tumult arose in the street, amidst which the watchword "Bourgogne" was plainly audible.

"The Bourguignians!" cried Dupuy, running to the window. "The constable has not been perceived by them; but they have closed the way to the Bastile."

"They have perceived us," cried an archer, "and are coming this way."

"Then is there but one chance left," thought Dupuy. "They will recognise the king, and bear him off. Archers," he continued aloud, "we must attack them. D'Armagnac and victory!"

Thus speaking, he rushed out, followed by his guards; and the next instant a fearful struggle in the street proved that they had come in collision with their enemies. The noise and cries increased, but, in the middle of all this tumult, the poor king remained motionless upon the settle, covering his face with his hands, and rocking backwards and forwards in childish apathy. The strife went on, and so near the dwelling, that the partisans and lances of the soldiers continually beat against the window;

and when the uproar appeared at its highest, the alarm of Dame Bourdichon was raised to the extreme of terror, by another violent knocking at the door.

“ Holy Mother ! ” cried the dame, scarcely able to speak for fear. “ Who is there ? ”

“ Open quickly,” cried a voice. “ We are friends ; it is I—Perinet Leclerc.”

CHAPTER X.

HOW ISABELLE AND D'ARMAGNAC MET THE KING AT BOURDICHON'S HOUSE DURING THE REVOLT.

UPON recognising the voice of Perinet above the confusion of the revolt, Dame Bourdichon was not slow in opening the door; for the increasing uproar, the clang of arms, the sounds of the alarm-bells, the glare of the conflagrations, and her own unaided situation, had all conspired to paralyse her usual energies. As she drew back the panel, the armourer entered, pale from loss of blood, which was flowing from a cut on the forehead, received by chance as he threaded the streets, staggering beneath the weight of Isabelle, who accompanied him, half carried, half dragged, after him.

"You are safe here, madame, at least," he exclaimed in breathless accents, as they crossed the threshold, to the trembling queen. "The

Hôtel St. Paul is crumbling beneath the flames, and, at present, we can find no other refuge."

"But they will return," replied the queen, looking anxiously round as she parted her long dark tresses from her forehead. "They will find me here, and I shall become their victim."

"Rest assured," continued the armourer, "that you are in safety. They are falling by hundreds, or flying before our troops."

"What a fearful night !" exclaimed Isabelle, placing her hand before her eyes, as if to shut out the bright red light that streamed into the room. "Leave me not here alone, Perinet, I implore you."

"You have naught to fear, madame," answered the armourer. "Your own party know of your retreat, and will come here to join you. But for me—I can stay here no longer; a solemn vow binds me, and I must depart."

"And D'Armagnac?—" cried the queen.

"It is the constable, madame, that I am seeking; we have an old account to settle," replied Perinet, with bitterness. Then, passing through the panel, he left the apartment, leaving Isabelle with Dame Bourdichon and the king,

who still remained unconscious of the passing events, crouched beneath his mantle, in the corner of the spacious chimney.

As Perinet departed, the fright of the dame returned, and she would have called him back, had not Isabelle requested her to be silent; reminding her, at the same time, that her cries would direct others towards the house, whose presence would not be so desirable. Her caution even extended to putting out the lamp, lest it should be seen from the street, and trusting only to the fitful gleams of the burning Hôtel St. Paul for light.

“Is this shop the only apartment in the house that looks into the street?” asked the queen.

“There is my chamber above it, madame,” was the reply of the dame.

“Take your station, then, at the window,” said Isabelle; “and if you see any troops pass, crying the pass-word of Burgundy, call them in immediately. We shall then be surrounded by our friends.”

The woman left the shop, to ascend to her own apartment, leaving Isabelle in perfect darkness, broken only, as we have observed, by

occasional flashes of light from the conflagration. The tumult of the combat had died away; the street no longer resounded with the cries of the soldiery, and the din of weapons; but an impressive and awful stillness supervened, occasionally interrupted by a distant murmur, which again dying away, served only to render the silence more fearful. Unconscious of her husband's presence, the Queen retired to the embayment of the window, and gathering her rich mantle, now torn and soiled, closely round her, appeared lost in her own reflections. In her present position, the calm that now reigned was more harassing than the excitement of the tumult; and yet, in this quietude, every eye in the large city was awake, and every ear was vigilant for catching the least sound.

She had been plunged in this reverie for about a quarter of an hour, when an approaching confusion once more recalled her to a sense of her dangerous position. Shouts and cries of alarm, with the clamour as of an irritated multitude, rose from the street. Now the riot approached—it was immediately under the window; and the torches borne by the crowd lighted up the shop as they passed. They

pressed on, and the light became less vivid, and the noise more distant; it was evident from their speed that they were pursuing some object of importance.

Suddenly, the queen heard footsteps in the passage. It was clear they arose from a single individual, who moved with difficulty. Then the panel was opened, and some one entered the apartment, breathing hard and audibly, as if with pain. The stranger approached the spot where the queen rested, and feeling about in the obscurity, placed his hand upon her very chair, when Isabelle rose hurriedly.

"There is some one here," cried the intruder, as the queen started up. "Who art thou? Answer."

But Isabelle spoke not. She recognised the voice of the constable, and fear had deprived her of utterance.

"Answer me," continued D'Armagnac, for it was he, seizing her arm. "You shall not leave until you have replied. You are not the woman I left here, for she was old and wrinkled; but you are young; your flesh is soft, and your skin fine and delicate. Why do you fear to be recognised?"

He paused for an answer, but in vain. The trembling Isabelle still remained silent.

An involuntary expression of surprise burst from D'Armagnac, as he passed his hand over the queen's head and neck.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "what have we here? Gold—jewels—a coronet! Isabelle! you are unknown no longer!"

"D'Armagnac," faltered the queen, now that she saw that all concealment was useless, "you have discovered my retreat, but I am not yet your prisoner."

"Neither am I in your power," returned the constable. "We are alone — we are each expecting aid and succour. To whomsoever it arrives first will be the victory."

"L'Isle Adam! Graville!" cried the queen anxiously. "Where are ye?"

"They forget you, Isabelle," returned D'Armagnac, with bitterness. "They have but their own safety to care for, and you are but a cipher in their stratagems."

"They are coming!" exclaimed Isabelle, joyously, as a noise was heard in the street, amidst which the war-cry of Burgundy was plainly to be distinguished.

“ Let them hasten, then,” replied the constable, as another cry of D’Armagnac sounded from the outside of the building. “ They must be speedy, or they will not be here first. Listen, Isabelle ! do you not hear my name pronounced ? ”

“ ’Tis a vain hope,” returned the queen, after an instant of attention. “ Your partisans are already silent. Again—‘ Vive Bourgogne ! ’ ’tis the only name they will cry to-night.”

The king, who had to this moment remained in the same fixed attitude at the hearth, lifted up his head at the queen’s mention of the name of Burgundy, and assumed an attitude of attention.

“ To-morrow,” cried the constable, “ there will be but one cry in the city—it will be ‘ Vive D’Armagnac ! ’ ”

He had scarcely spoken, when the king sprang from his seat, and rushed towards them, exclaiming—

“ And who will cry ‘ Vive la France ? ’ ”

The queen and the constable started with surprise and terror at the unexpected apparition of the unfortunate monarch, for they immediately recognised him.

“ Ay, France ! ” continued Charles, speaking with an emphasis which he had long since lost. “ Is there not, in this unhappy kingdom, but one old man, helpless and insane, who thinks of her ? Always ‘ Armagnac,’ or ‘ Burgundy,’ and nothing for our fair France, although her best blood is flowing like water to feed their enmity.”

“ Merciful powers ! ” cried the queen, half bewildered, “ how came he here ? ”

“ They have spilt this blood in their quarrels,” continued the king wildly, “ whilst I alone must render an account to God for it,—I, who carry neither the white nor red cross upon my shoulders. Armagnac ! I demanded aid and protection for my people—I placed my kingdom in your hands to do this : how have you accomplished it ? ”

“ Let her reply, sire,” answered the constable with emphasis ; “ let her reply who gave up your kingdom to a stranger.”

“ And yet she swore to defend it ! ” exclaimed, the king.

There was something in the manner of the unhappy Charles that awed both parties. It was long since he had spoken with the force

and semblance of reason, and the queen shrank before his reproaches.

“I could not defend it, sire,” she replied. “Was I not driven from France by the constable’s order?”

“It is true—too true,” returned the king; “I have known nothing but hatred and treachery from all quarters. Upon whom shall I cast my malediction?”

“Ask him who drove me from you,” cried the queen.

“Ask the *mistress* of the Chevalier Bourdon,” added the constable.

“He wished to crush me for a crime he could not prove,” continued Isabelle.

“And you sought to justify yourself by fire and sword,” retorted the king. “Isabelle! did you think that I should be always mad? Did you never tremble at the idea that a ray of sense might one day break in upon me?”

“You reply not, madame,” said the constable; “the king waits for your answer.”

“Isabelle!” continued Charles vehemently, “you have dishonoured my old age—shame and disgrace be yours for so doing. You have betrayed the kingdom—you have delivered up

my crown into the hands of a traitor—eternal torments be your reward. I curse you, I spurn you from my presence as I would a serpent.”

“My lord!” cried the agonised woman, “you know not what you say. I am innocent.”

“You are guilty,” replied the king sternly, “and the punishment of your crimes awaits you. I have pronounced your doom.”

“And who will dare to execute your orders, whatever they may be?” demanded the queen, recalling her fortitude by a violent effort.

“One who has never betrayed his master, and who will be still faithful to him,” interposed the constable.

“You would not assassinate me?” exclaimed the queen.

“I would obey my master,” coldly returned D’Armagnac.

“No!” cried Isabelle, falling on her knees, and clinging to the king’s robe; “this must not be, my lord; you will retract these fearful words; you will not thus condemn a woman who sues for pardon; for I am alone and defenceless. If I am guilty, my lord, deliver me over to the peers of my kingdom; but kill

me not without a trial—it would be murder.”

“At my feet, Isabelle !” observed the king, apparently heedless of her appeal ; “it is long since you have thus acted.”

“My liege !” continued the queen, in hurried accents, “whatever you may deem me now, you once loved me. You cannot spurn me from you when I thus supplicate for mercy.”

“Sire !” exclaimed D’Armagnac, “she used these begging accents when she asked the guardianship of Vincennes for the Chevalier Bourdon.”

As the constable pronounced the name, Isabelle rose from her kneeling posture, and fixing her gaze stedfastly on him, continued, “It was an act of honour and trust well kept, to murder that young man at the Châtelet.” Then turning to the king she added : “Enough blood has been already spilt—must mine still be added to the stream ? But, if it is your will—I submit : you alone will answer to Heaven for the shedding of it ; and another phantom, in place of the one you dread, will be always at your side.”

The queen had well chosen her words. At

the bare mention of the phantom, which had first caused the madness of the king, and which haunted him ever afterwards, he uttered a wild cry and clung to D'Armagnac for safety, ejaculating, as he pointed at some imaginary object—"See, he is there! he comes towards me. I can feel his cold breath upon my face, and I have not the power to thrust him from me!"

"Monsieur," exclaimed D'Armagnac, "there is no spectre here. Recall your reason, I beseech you—collect yourself, or all will yet be lost."

But the queen saw the advantageous position her allusion to the phantom had gained for her, and she continued, "Now tell the constable to kill me, sire. I am prepared to die, but tomorrow I shall again be with you,—at your council—in your court: at your festive banquet, or lonely midnight watching, I shall be ever at your side."

"No, no," returned the king, "it must not be."

"You would not retract your sentence, sire?" said the constable. "Is she not guilty? and have you not pronounced her condemnation?"

Before the king could reply, a wild uproar

broke the silence, which came nearer and nearer, until the streets re-echoed with its tumult. Rushing to the window, the constable tore down the shutters and looked into the street. A thousand men-at-arms were hurrying along its narrow thoroughfare, and the cries of "Vive la Reine!" raised by innumerable voices, were the only ones heard amidst the confusion. The queen caught the sounds, and seizing the constable by the arm, as she drew him from the window, exclaimed, "At length, they have arrived. Now, D'Armagnac, our long struggle shall be speedily settled. Even now, you would have murdered me. Blood shall still flow to end the strife, but it will be your own."

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.—THE GIBBET AT MONTFAUCON.

THE crowd of soldiers, and adherents to the cause of Burgundy and the queen, who now came rushing onwards in the Rue St. Antoine, were headed, as Isabelle had conjectured, by L'Isle Adam and Graville, under the guidance of Bourdichon, who, captured from the party to whose care the constable had consigned him, once more found himself in the number of the queen's troops. Tossed about like a ball by the excited mob—now bandied over head from one to the other, and anon borne a short way on the shoulders of the sturdiest rioters—the luckless little bourgeois had scarcely an atom of breath left in his body ; and it was by the medium of an energetic action, rather than words, that, on arriving in front of his own house, he made the multitude understand it

was the locality where he had left the constable. But his intelligence was scarcely needed ; for Isabelle had thrown open the casement, and was waving on her partisans to enter the house with her scarf, which she had hurriedly detached for the purpose.

With the eagerness of a pack of bloodhounds rushing upon their prey, the mob beat in the doors and rushed into the house, bearing their torches aloft, with the uncontrollable force of a mighty inundation. At the first alarm, D'Armagnac drew his sword, and placed himself by the panel ; but as soon as he perceived the utter hopelessness of any opposition he could offer, he threw the weapon away from him, and, quietly folding his arms, retreated to the king's side, as the apartment filled with the rioters.

"Death to the constable !" was shouted by a hundred voices, as they perceived D'Armagnac in their power ; and one or two advanced towards him, brandishing their daggers. On perceiving this movement, the king threw himself in their way, exclaiming,

"What want ye with the constable ? Whoever ye are, spare his life, for he is the only

friend I have remaining. Ye would not kill him by my side?"

"The king!" cried several of the foremost of the Bourguignans, as they recognised Charles, and fell back spontaneously.

"Isabelle," continued the monarch, turning to his consort, "why do you wish for his death? You have power to set him free—one word from you, and his life is saved."

"I have no power over it, monseigneur," answered the queen; "it belongs to another, who is not here."

"I implore you——"

"Enough, enough, my liege!" interrupted Isabelle, seizing with energy the hands of the king, and forcing them down from the attitude of supplication which he was assuming. Then, turning to the crowd, she exclaimed, "I am queen and regent—no word can be potent here but mine; and the constable is my enemy."

Another wild shout arose from the soldiers, as they again rushed towards D'Armagnac, who fell, upon receiving a wound in his leg from the halberd of one of the men-at-arms. The king, uttering a cry of terror, threw his mantle over the prostrate constable, and stood

before him, upon which the soldiers once more fell back ; until, encouraged by the presence of the queen, Graville drew the king away from his minister. At this instant, a man, pale and breathless, entered the room ; and, forcing his way through the dense mass of rioters, stood over the prostrate constable, with his drawn sword pointed towards the insurgents.

“ Back, all of you ! ” he cried with energy ; “ the life of this man belongs to me—I alone can dispose of it.”

“ Perinet ! ” cried the queen, as she recognised the armourer.

“ You will not kill him, then,” exclaimed the king. “ Order these fearful men to retreat, or they will assassinate him.”

“ Not one of their weapons shall touch him, sire,” replied Perinet. Then, turning to the queen, he continued, “ Isabelle, I kept my word when faith was wanted, and I expect the same from you. I have, in my doublet, a paper, signed by your own hand, as regent of France. Tell these persons, then, that no one else has right to dispose of his life—not even yourself.”

“ It is true,” returned the queen. “ But

what wish you, Perinet?—you are not going to betray me?”

“Far from it, madame; I would but avenge myself.”

“His life is in your power,” exclaimed the queen, “and you can dispose of him as you please. What shall be his destiny?”

The armourer cast a glance of triumph at his fallen enemy, and drew off his own surcoat. He turned to the constable, and showed him the scars of a recent punishment upon his shoulders. Then, in reply to Isabelle, he added, with an exulting smile,

“The common gibbet at Montfauçon.”

“You would not hang me like a dog?” said D’Armagnac feebly.

“You beat me like one, in front of the Châtelet,” returned Perinet. “Ho, there!” he continued; “a horse for Queen Isabelle. It will be a dainty sight to behold the constable of France on the thieves’ gibbet. Sire de Graville, to your charge I commit the traitor. L’Isle Adam, you will take care of the king. And now onward to Montfauçon.”

A roar of exultation broke from the surrounding crowd as Perinet spoke. Indeed, so

bitter was the hatred entertained by every follower of the cause of Burgundy against the wily D'Armagnac, that it required all the exertion of authority on the part of Graville to restrain the populace from tearing him to pieces. Clearing the room, however, of the greater part of the throng, who now hastily bent their way in the direction of the gibbet, the queen's faithful adherent collected a few tried men of his own guard around him, and placing the constable in the midst of them, they left the house, the queen following on horseback, whilst Perinet rode by her side

The gibbet of Montfauçon, towards which point every step was now turned, was placed on the eminence from which it derived its name, still existing beyond the faubourgs of St. Martin and the Temple. Upon a parallelogram of solid masonry, about fifty feet long by thirty-five feet broad, were erected sixteen stone columns, supporting long transverse wooden beams, to which the chains of the criminals were attached. A vault built in the centre of the foundation, served as a receptacle for the bodies, as they dried and fell to pieces; and this was closed by a strong door placed at the commencement of a flight of stairs.

The spot where the gibbet stood is now covered with buildings, and forms an industrious locality, but at the period of our legend nothing could be more wild and lonely than its situation. Its presence seemed to have blasted every thing around it for some distance ; and the majority of the people regarded it with superstitious dread, rarely approaching its unhallowed precincts, save at the times when it received a new victim. And when the sun had gone down, and his last rays had fallen upon the gaunt pillars that marked its elevation, with the blackened remnants of mortality that hung between them—when twilight stole over the wild and savage waste upon which it was built, and the distant spires of Paris faded in the gloom, the traveller went far out of his way to avoid the gibbet, and shuddered as he heard the wind moan through the dreary pile, like the wailings of those who had expiated their offences upon it, from the common assassin to the great and—in too many cases good—men, whose crumbling bones were scattered on the floor of its enclosure.

The report of D'Armagnac's intended execution spread like wildfire amidst the infuriated mob of soldiers, artisans, and bourgeois, that

were assembled in the Rue St. Antoine ; and the vast mass immediately rushed onwards, in one voluminous wave of irresistible force, towards the Porte du Temple, through the narrow tortuous streets which led to that entrance of the city. So obnoxious had the government of the constable made him to the people at large, as we have before stated, that Graville himself ran no small risk, from the missiles they were every instant hurling at his prisoner, both from the surrounding rioters and from the windows of the houses. On approaching the gate, a temporary check took place, from the inadequacy of the portal to allow the dense mass to pass ; and many hundreds plunged boldly into the fosse and swam across ; whilst other large bodies hastened round to the Porte St. Martin, collecting in magnitude as they went, like some mighty avalanche. On arriving at the open ground, without the city walls, the crowd rushed onwards with unrestrained impatience towards the elevation ; and innumerable torches cast a vivid glare over the marais, now perfectly obliterated with the throng of visitors.

The main body of the Bourguignian troops still kept in firm order round the queen, who

continued in the rear, with Perinet at her side. As they approached the gibbet, it appeared rising from a hill of flame, so numerous were the torch-bearers who now covered Montmartre ; and some of the more daring had climbed the pillars, and were running round upon the beams, like so many demons waiting for their prey. In every direction lights were seen crossing the open country, all tending in the direction of the gibbet ; and by the time Graville and his body of men-at-arms arrived, conducting the prisoner, it was only by their exertions alone that he could approach the scaffold.

In the midst of this wild tumult of excitement, the constable was the only one who appeared unmoved. With his arms folded, he maintained one fixed position, occasionally raising his head to throw a glance of contempt at the throng around him. As the group approached the scaffold, Perinet leapt from his horse, and leading the queen's palfrey by the rein, placed it under the protection of Graville, whilst he himself assumed the command of the body of guards that surrounded D'Armagnac.

A roar of impatience burst from the multitude, as they recognised Perinet on the flight of stone

steps, cut in the masonry which led to the platform.

“Do you hear that shout?” asked the armourer of D’Armagnac. “You enjoy a strange popularity with the people. They are anxious for you to present yourself before them.”

“I care as little for your irony as for your punishment,” exclaimed D’Armagnac, speaking for the first time. “If you think that I shrink from facing them, you are mistaken. Give me place, and I will allow them the wished-for sight.”

The armourer ascended the stairs, and D’Armagnac followed him, still preserving the same haughty bearing. As he reached the summit, another tremendous shout of mingled hatred and triumph saluted him, and one or two burning torches were hurled at him by the more athletic of the crowd below.

“Snarl — bay — scream yourselves hoarse, vile curs!” cried the constable. “My voice can still be heard, and I send it forth, terrible and threatening, with a malediction of eternal infamy and ruin upon you. I curse you, Perinet Leclerc, and the vile cause you have espoused.”

“People of Paris,” exclaimed the armourer, “you shall yourselves be the executioners of the tyrant who has so long oppressed you. Heed not his curses—they will but rise as evidence against him before the Great Tribunal at whose bar he is about to appear. Seize the end of this cord, and await my signal to do justice upon the tyrant.”

As he spoke, he threw the end of a line over the cross-beam, and then cast the other extremity to the crowd below, who rushed eagerly forwards to seize it. Taking the noose that terminated it in his hand, he threw it carelessly over the neck and shoulders of the constable.

“Hold !” he continued, as the impatient mob commenced to retreat with the cord, “All is not yet settled between us.”

“What fresh insult have you invented ?” said D’Armagnac, turning pale with terror and helpless rage.

“We have an old score to balance,” returned Perinet, tearing off the constable’s doublet, and drawing his poniard.

“You would assassinate me !” cried the constable. “Strike then, I should prefer death

even from *your* weapon, rather than the dog's fate you have assigned to me."

"You are mistaken," returned Perinet. "Constable—when you branded me on the Quai du Châtelet, I told you that you also should carry the red cross of Burgundy, and that *I never broke my word*. Receive it, and then commend your soul to our Lady, for your last moment has arrived."

Thus speaking, he thrust the garments of the constable aside, and scored his shoulders with two deep transverse wounds. Then, casting the crimsoned blade from him, he cried aloud, "Death to the traitor!"

The insurgent who had charge of the cord retreated; and in an instant D'Armagnac was suspended in the air. A fearful cry of triumph greeted his execution; and the sounds rang in his ears whilst his life was departing, for the cord was hastily and badly adjusted, and he was some minutes struggling in agony. At length, the hands fell motionless at his side, and a lifeless mass was all that remained of the constable, which kept slowly revolving, as the multitude, in their savage exultation, jerked it up and down.

Perinet waited on the platform until all was over, and then descended to the spot where Isabelle had taken her station.

“Madame,” he exclaimed, “all is now finished, and you are the sole ruler of France. I have avenged Bourdon’s murder, and my own dishonour. Resume your power, and let the fate of that wretched man warn you from grinding down too harshly a people who are disposed to serve you. Were I ambitious I would ask some grace at your hands; but I have accomplished all I wished, and we part this hour. But, should revolt again disturb our country, (which Heaven avert!) the will of Isabelle de Bavière will be sacredly obeyed by

“THE ARMOURER OF PARIS.”

THE END.

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